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RUSSIA

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL

BY
L. TIKHOMIROV

Translated from the French by
EDWARD AVELING, D.Sc.

VOL. I.

SECOND

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P R E F A C E.

OF late years Russia has attracted more and more of the attention of England and the civilised world. This attention is the more significant, as its object is not now, as formerly, only the Government. That which engages it is the country itself, *i.e.*, the people. Many publications on Russia, multitudes of translations from Russian novelists, are a clear proof of this.

I hope, therefore, that I need not explain the reasons that have urged me to undertake this work. I have tried, as much as possible, to bring it within the reach of the general public by making it as brief as possible, and at the same time sufficiently thorough and serious for the reader to study in it Russia as a whole.

Russia as a social organism is my subject. I aim at describing political and social Russia just as it is, with its infinite territories, peopled by

millions of peasants, uncultured but full of sympathetic qualities ; with its oddly organised classes ; with its *intelliguentia*, that martyr of its historic mission ; with its political problems, so mysterious, so involved. I see before me this land that causes so much suffering to those who love her, and yet knows how to attach them to her so strongly that no sufferings on her behalf terrify them. I am thinking of the poet's cry :

“ Poor and rich,
Powerful and powerless,
Oh, Mother Russia ! ”

Will this image rise to the eyes of my reader ? It is for him to answer the question.

An indispensable explanation is yet necessary. Not knowing enough French to write in that tongue, I wrote the work in Russian, and then translated it with the help of my friend, M. Albert Savine. I made a literal translation : M. Savine gave to this translation a literary style. Thus the purely literary form of the book belongs to his able pen. I may add that I have always been struck with the refinement of M. Savine's taste ; and although he does not know Russian, I find he has rendered admirably the finest shades of meaning in my text, a task the more difficult

as my ideas often, by his own confession, go far beyond, and sometimes are in opposition to, his.

Moreover, my book owes to M. Albert Savine certain slight alterations in the arrangement of the chapters, etc. Finally, and most important, I owe to M. Savine many hints as to the side of Russian life most likely to interest the general public. If, therefore, the reader finds this book answer in any way the questions he wants to ask about Russia, he will bear in mind that he owes this in a great measure to my collaborator. Without his help, the attainment of this end would have been very difficult for one addressing a public unknown to him and so different from the Russian audience to which he is accustomed.

L. TIKHOMIROV.

February, 1886.

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

I HAVE tried to translate the work of Leo Tikhomirov accurately, but I would not wish to be understood as necessarily endorsing every opinion expressed in it. Whilst in almost every case such an endorsement would be forthcoming, there are one or two instances in which his ideas, though not, I believe, going beyond mine, are to some extent in opposition to them.

E. A.

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BOOK I.

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND RUSSIA.

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CHAPTER I.

Russia as a name in political geography, and the Russian nation.—Weakness and fragility of great empires.—The vitality of Russia.—Her manner of historical development.—This essentially the development of her people.

GLANCE at the map of Russia; then try to imagine, with closed eyes, the endless space before you. Unbidden this question comes into your mind: Is Russia in truth a country, or is it only a geographical name? Can there be a real inner bond uniting all these populations, so far asunder? In truth, what bond can exist between an inhabitant of Kamtchatka and an inhabitant of Podolia, seeing that, from the nature of the means of communication, the mere passing from one of these countries to the other implies a three or four months' journey? Even if we imagine a train travelling at forty kilomètres an hour, without stopping, straight from the western frontier to the eastern limit of Russia, it would take not less than a fortnight to traverse this distance of 15,000 kilometres; and at his journey's end the traveller might congratulate himself on having passed through a territory greater than Europe and Australia taken together, a territory

equal to one-sixth of the land on the globe—
22,311,997 square kilometres.¹

In truth this seems too large for a *nation*. History furnishes some examples of gigantic monarchies. Thus the Mongolian empire was much larger than Russia. Turkey, at the time of its magnificence, had a territory of 10,000,000 kilometres. England, *with its colonies*, actually exceeds Russia by 464,000 kilometres. But who would regard one of these states as a single country? England has India and Canada. No one will say that these are English countries. For centuries Turkey held Greece or Bulgaria. It has always been clear that there was no organic connexion between these countries and their conqueror, although the latter had imposed upon them its political name. This is a characteristic of all huge monarchies, and the explanation of their comparatively short duration. Do we not see a handful of mountaineers in the Pyrenees keep their organic unity for centuries, whilst, one after the other, by the side of this handful of Basques, the empire of Rome, the eternal city, the universal empire of Charlemagne, the empire of Charles V., on which the sun never set, appear, wax, and wane?

These great memories of history haunt you when you picture to yourself the enormous territory of Russia. Can we find there any part endowed with organic unity? Is it but a fragile conglomeration, like the empires of Attila and of Tamerlane? This

¹ For the sake of comparison, let us remember that France, exclusive of its colonies, contains only 528,577 square kilometres; Germany, 544,907; Austria, 624,045.

last supposition seems the more plausible, seeing that in the list of Russian nationalities there are, without reckoning foreigners, more than seventy names. How can these diverse peoples be held as one? Ought we not to expect to see Russia break up one of these fine days, leaving in its place a number of independent countries?

Without working out in full this question—I shall give later on some details that will make the reader clear on this point,—it is certain that one fact thoroughly proven is always worth more than any number of suppositions. Russia is a fact humanity has had plenty of time to grasp. The existence of gigantic artificial empires, like the Oriental ones, is not lasting. Russia has existed already more than five hundred years as a state, more than a thousand as a national unity. What changes she has seen around her during all these centuries! She was present at the astounding rise and at the final fall of the Tartar empire. She saw the birth of that powerful Ottoman empire whose inevitable death is now but a question of years. Born at the same time as Russia, Poland has already passed through all the stages of political growth and decomposition. Kindred revolutions have occurred in Western Europe. The power of Spain blossoms and decays. The temporal power of the popes is born and dies. A crowd of small political organisms—the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden—have reached those extreme limits of growth which they cannot pass. . . . And Russia? Russia lives, develops always; she has not passed her highest point, is not upon the downward path that leads to decrepitude. She marches rather

towards a completeness as yet unachieved. Her appearance has little likeness to that of states that have only an artificial existence. Even in the growth of the Russian empire the presence of some unknown organic force is felt. That growth in no way resembles the conquests of Tamerlane, which ten years afterwards were as if they had not been. Russia grows without pause through whole centuries.

The Russian state had in the 15th century 560,000 kilometres; in the 16th, 8,720,000; in the 17th, 14,392,000; in the 18th, 17,080,000; in the 19th, 22,311,992. The regularity and steadiness of advance in these figures should be noted. Yet more significant is the fact that very often the increase in size of the state was preceded by an increase in size of the *national territory*. Large areas, north, east, south, were often occupied or conquered by the people before the Government dreamed of taking them. It has even come to pass that the Government has refused to take under its protection territory that the Cossacks have conquered.

Hence the characteristic phenomenon, that the growth of Russian territory depends but little on the genius of its rulers. That growth did not cease under imbecile sovereigns like Theodore I., nor did it cease at the times of the greatest political confusion. The beginning of the 17th century was for Russia a period of political disorganization that almost ended in the loss of her independence. Nevertheless, whilst in 1598 she had a territory of 8,792,000 square kilometres, in 1645, at the end of this troublous time, she had raised it to 14,000,000.

The same phenomenon occurs in the second quarter of the 18th century. It is clear that this fact cannot be ascribed to the accidental successes of great conquerors, and that its causes must be sought more deeply than these, in the very life of the nation.

The vitality of Russia is shown yet more clearly in her times of trial. Our history is that of a ceaseless struggle, that more than once has brought the people to bay. From 1238 Russia bowed beneath the yoke of the Tartar conquerors, a terrible yoke borne by her for two centuries. Half-vanquished, torn limb from limb, she nevertheless recovered strength enough to rise and to re-enter on the scene with more power of resistance than ever. During the troublous times at the beginning of the 17th century, Russia, torn by civil war, was not only without a reigning dynasty, but without a national Government. Part of her territory was invaded by the Swedes ; the rest to a great extent conquered by the Poles, who held even the capital of the empire. Russia had no longer either an army or an administration. The boyards, who formed the miserable provisional Government of the country, decreed, under the Polish soldiers' bayonets, the accession of Prince Vladislas to the Muscovite throne. On a sudden from all sides resounded the voices of patriots ; not tzars, nor great boyards, nor governors, nor officials, but men of the people,—inferior nobles like the brothers Liapounov, the monk Abraham Palitzine, a small trader, Kouzma Minine. Prince Pojarsky, whose family had long fallen, was the most eminent of them. A general revolt breaks out in Russia. Small bodies of

insurgents (chichis, they were called) vanquish the Polish army. A militia of 100,000 men approaches Moscow ; this finding itself powerless, countless new troops come from the hearts of the provinces. That mighty struggle, ending in a complete deliverance of the fatherland, is borne by the people. Even after the tzar is nominated, the National Assembly (*zemsky-sobor*) sits for many years ; and it is above all to the energy and prudence of its representatives that Russia owes her freedom.

Do not these history-memories proclaim the organic forces of Russia, forces whose activity does not cease even in times of political disorganization ? These forces more than once put to nought the calculations of conquerors, who as a rule only saw in Russia her Government. Thus, in 1612, the Jesuits, always at one with the kings of Poland as to every conquest of Russia, thought it sufficient to strike a strong blow at the centre of government. A century later, Charles XII., King of Sweden, based all his calculations on an understanding with the Government of the Ukraine. The plans of Napoleon I.,¹ who thought he had only to fight Alexander I., were always thwarted by the people.

¹ Napoleon I., however, with the keen nose of a man who belongs by birth to a revolutionary time, had some suspicion of the importance of the masses of the people : he tried to seduce the Russian serfs by promises of emancipation. This timid attempt produced no result. The popular imagination has, however, been influenced by the memory of the great conqueror. Even at the present time among our sectaries there is a group called Napoleonovchtchina (Napoleonians), who worship Napoleon's portrait. As to the bulk of the people, they confuse him with Antichrist.

CHAPTER II.

Population of Russia.—Population of Russian race.—Population of foreign race.—Slight influence of the latter.—Distribution of these populations.

If we now examine more in detail the composition of the Russian population, the existence of a national unity will not astonish us so much. It is true the Russian empire includes more than seventy different nationalities; but we must not exaggerate the importance of this fact. Of 100,000,000 inhabitants of the empire, the *Russian* race reckons as 67,000,000, so that there are left for all other races only 33,000,000. Thus the number of each of the latter cannot be large; in fact, the Finnish race—the most numerous, except the Slav, in Russia—forms only six per cent. of the population of the empire, and moreover is broken up into eleven varieties, separated one from the other by enormous distances, by difference of speech, by utter absence of intercourse. Besides, many of these races are savage tribes of some thousands of people.¹ Speaking

¹ E.g. Samoyèdes, 25,000; Vogoulis and Ougres, 2,000; Mongols of Siberia, 5,000; Ioukaghirs, Tchouktchis, Guiliaks, Kamtchadals, together, 40,000. The mountain tribes of the Caucasus (Karatchaïs, Oubikhs, Koumiks, Svanets, Ossetines, etc.) are often not more numerous; each only numbers from 5,000 to 25,000 people. These examples might be multiplied.

generally, we might ignore one-half of them without the population of the empire really diminishing one-half per cent. These small tribes, in fact, can be left more and more out of our calculations, partly because they are assimilating to the Russians, partly, unhappily, on account of the mortality, at times terrible, among them.

Of course some of the peoples of the empire not belonging to the Russian race are of more importance than this. Whole provinces have had their history, and preserve even to-day a highly developed language and a civilization at times superior to that of the purely Russian race. These provinces occupy part of the west and south of Russia. Finland, the governments of the Baltic, Lithuania, Poland, part of Bessarabia, the governments situated beyond the Caucasus, are all so many countries where Russia is looked upon as a stranger. Often these provinces are only kept in subjection by aid of bayonets and the police. Yet, eliminating all these countries hostile by nature to Russia, we have left after all a colossal territory, inhabited by a purely Russian race, with here and there a small number of inhabitants belonging to other races. This territory, of more than four million square kilometres, stretches in European Russia from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea and the Caucasus. Of the population upon this territory, the Russian race forms ninety per cent. In Asia, the territory almost exclusively peopled by Russians occupies all the south of Siberia and from the Oural to the Pacific Ocean (at least five million kilometres). To give the exact figures of the Russian population in this

district is impossible, but half of the population of Siberia is Russian. Whatever that population may be, Siberia belongs, beyond doubt, to the Russians; the natives—small savage tribes—have been driven to the forests and the marshy plains of the north, and cannot be our rivals.¹

There are, however, among the aborigines of Siberia, races capable of civilization,² e.g., the Yakouts (nearly 250,000), and especially the Bouriates (nearly 260,000). But these races easily come under Russian influence, and hence are not able to bring about any political complication.

At the eastern end of the empire, on the banks of the Amour and Oussouri, are provinces to which China may lay claim. These provinces belonged to her formerly. Excepting these, the other twelve to thirteen million square kilometres of Siberia are incontestably Russian.

Thus, not reckoning those provinces of the empire

¹ Of one of these tribes, a writer whose sympathy with all the oppressed is indisputable, says: "The Ostiaks belong to the category of races that are dying out. One can see this at the first glance. They are very weak and stunted. Two Ostiaks can get into a canoe so small that it could scarcely carry one European of average size. It is sad to see these half-naked savages trotting alongside a river. The men are only clothed in a shirt, dirty and almost in rags. Their bellies and heads seem disproportionately big. Their horribly thin feet make them look like birds."—DEBAGORY-MOKRIEVITCH: "Memoirs," in the *Messenger of the Will of the People*, No. I.

² An historian of some ability, Chtchapov, was descended on his mother's side from the Bouriates. The mother of the revolutionist, Neoustroev, shot lately, was an Iakoutka. The celebrated traveller, Mikloukha-Maklaï came also from a Siberian race, I do not know which. Similar examples are not infrequent.

that have with Russia only a connexion more or less artificial, we still find a territory of seventeen to eighteen million kilometres for Russia properly so-called, a territory inhabited by 77,000,000 people, of whom 67,000,000 are pure Russian. The predominance of the Russian race explains to a certain extent, therefore, that national unity so often manifested in history.

We see, then, that Russian nationality is firmly fixed in the empire, although this consideration certainly does not destroy the importance of the question of nationalities in Russia.

To speak of, to insist upon, this question, is not to lose sight of the aim of this book. On the contrary, it limits very rigidly its subject-matter. Our study cannot, in fact, pass the point at which the purely Russian provinces end. If the author were to write, not upon actual Russia alone, but also on Poland, Finland, Georgia, etc., his book would become a library.

The existence of immense provinces, only held by Russia through force of bayonets and the omnipotence of the police, is in itself an internal question of great gravity. The periodical risings in Poland absolve me from the necessity of urging this point.

In speaking, then, of Russia, I must devote some pages to its frontier provinces, concerning myself especially with the firmness of the ties that join them to the Russian state, and with the importance to the imperial interests of the possession of these provinces.

CHAPTER III.

Finland.—Union on the basis of equality.—Its consequences.—
Ancient liberties of Finland.—*Modus vivendi*.—Strategic importance of Finland to Russia —Why the Finns are growing uneasy.

RUSSIA proper is surrounded, as I have already noted, on the southern and western side by a large belt of three million square kilometres, peopled to the number of at least twenty-four millions by subjects of stranger races. Hence the peculiar aspect of the Russian empire. Its maximum of force is at the centre, its relative weakness at the circumference, in the stranger bark that invests the central pith. Russia, however, shows in its different frontier provinces different degrees of solidity or, if you will, of weakness. Further, the importance to Russia of the question of nationalities is not the same in all her provinces. Let us look, therefore, at the position of affairs in each of them.

On the north-west frontier, between Russia and Sweden, lies a large country named Finland; it occupies a territory of 380,000 square kilometres, and includes more than 2,000,000 people (250,000 Swedes, the rest Finns). Amongst European races

the Finnish race has kinship with the Hungarians only. Once on a time it was a very numerous and very powerful race, that occupied immense territories in Europe and in Asia ; but little by little it has been absorbed by other peoples,¹ and now it is only to be found in Russia, dispersed as small groups in many places.

The Finnish language has nothing in common with the Swedish. But Finland, conquered by the Swedes more than six hundred years ago, and in their power until the peace of Tilsitt,² which gave it to Russia, bears even now the stamp of Swedish civilization.

Finland, although conquered by Russia when fighting against the Swedes, was annexed on a footing of equality, not as a conquered province. This is seen even in the title that the Russian tzars take : "We, by the will of God, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, Tzar of Poland, Grand Prince of Finland, etc." Alexander I., who now and then made a parade of liberal ideas, said that the annexation of Finland to Russia was simply her deliverance from the power of Sweden. Anyhow, Finland still has her own constitution, her own administration, diets, customs, budget, even her own tiny army ; all which does not prevent Russian battalions from holding all the Finnish fortresses.

Finland is really the only part of Russia in which the representatives of the people can control the

¹ The Great Russians especially have in their veins a mixture of Finnish blood.

² One part of Finland moreover (as far as the river Kumene) was in the hands of Russia in 1741.

Government ; the individual is secure from arbitrary administration, the press is free.

At the time of the annexation, sympathy with Sweden was strong in the country ; even to-day it exists. But the end of the Swedish rule was the signal for a grave crisis ; the Finnish race, that forms the great majority of the population, resolved to raise its voice. Until then the only literary language was that of Sweden, and a Finn who by education got out of the ruck, became *ipso facto* a Swede. By degrees the Finnish language was adopted in the law courts, in political life, in literature, so that to-day it is almost the ruling tongue. The Finnish race has come to life again, and is in contest with the Swedish. This contest is not exactly political, but it involves very important political consequences.

The more Finnish Finland becomes, the more she separates herself from Sweden—hence the stronger motive she has for alliance with Russia.

That is why the Russian Government has always fostered the national tendencies of the Finns.

It is, however, necessary to add, that Finland, in breaking off her connexion with Sweden, contracted no moral bond with Russia. To reach the frontier of Finland from St. Petersburg only takes an hour's railway journey, and yet, this frontier passed, one has the impression of being thousands of kilometres from St. Petersburg.

It is difficult to imagine two countries that know less of, have so little interest in, one another. As a rule, the Finn does not like the Russian, on whom he looks down ; and the Russian is absolutely

indifferent to what concerns the Finns. Events of social interest for Russia find an echo in Georgia, in Poland, on the Amour, but have no effect in Finland, where a Parisian revolution would be probably more talked of than one at St. Petersburg.

It is difficult to picture two social types so unlike as Russia and Finland. Finland¹ is an honest, hard-working citizen, whose life is lucrative, based on reason,—but always monotonous and somewhat sad. Russia is a reckless student, sometimes drunk, sometimes starving, capable of every folly, but capable also of sublime things, and always more concerned with the great problems of humanity than with paying his landlady. These two characters, so wide asunder, harmonize the better the less Russians and Finlanders meddle with one another's affairs; this is in fact the *modus vivendi* of the two peoples.

We may lay it down, that as long as Russia does not prevent Finland from living according to her

¹ Finland calls to mind in many things Switzerland: its people are hard-working, honest, energetic; they know how to make life independent and easy. Finland has no proletariat; the majority of its population has property in land. To a certain extent this is due to the obstinate efforts of the local "senate." The soil of Finland is barren; moreover, the name signifies "a country of lakes and marshes." If we added, "and of granite rocks," the description would be complete. But, despite all these disadvantages, thanks to the perseverance of its inhabitants, the country is now covered with fields in full cultivation. The wheat-production, however, is not enough to feed the Finlanders; they eke this out by the produce of their commerce and industry. The Finlanders are excellent sailors; their fleet consists of 1,593 ships. In 1875 the number of factories was 419, with a produce of 10,000,000 roubles.

own taste, that country will remain her faithful ally. In the Crimean War, Finland fought bravely for Russia; in the last war against Turkey, the Finns fought valiantly with Russia upon the far-off plains of Bulgaria.

It is so much the more easy to find a *modus vivendi* favourable to the interests of both peoples, in that Russia only needs Finland from the point of view of strategy. St. Petersburg is, as we have said, only one hour from the frontier of Finland, and to Finland still belongs all the coast north of the Gulf of Finland. Protected by the guns of Sweaborg, a hostile fleet could blockade Cronstadt and St. Petersburg. In a word, once in the hands of Russia's enemies, Finland would be a terrible weapon against her. She was such a weapon often in former times during our wars with Sweden.

From all other points of view, Finland is of no importance to Russia. Her ports are remote from our commercial routes; her soil produces nothing absolutely essential to us. The greatest possible development of her forces in no way threatens our interests as a nation; for in all the provinces along the frontier of Finland, Russia is absolutely at home. On her part, the more Finland develops as a Finnish country, the less reason has she for opposition to political union with Russia; and this the more as she needs Russian wheat for her own consumption, and Russian markets to get rid of her products. In 1882, the amount of importation into Finland was 13,000,000 roubles in goods of Russian origin;¹ and its exportation to the empire was more

¹ Wheat represented six of these thirteen millions.

than 15,000,000 roubles (over 10,000,000, manufactured goods). It will be seen that this account is not without profit for the trade of the great principality ; and the Finlanders, it would seem, ought only to desire that their friendly relations with the empire may last as long as possible.

Unfortunately, to reckon thus is to reckon without the host. Take him into account, and all is changed. A despotic government, with millions of bayonets for its agents, is a subject of great uneasiness to the Finlanders. The great principality cannot forget the fate of Poland, also the recipient of a constitution at the hands of Alexander I. One caprice of a despot can annihilate the political freedom of the country ; now Russia is not badly off for despots, nor for despots that are very capricious at times.

This ceaseless fear stops the political development of Finland. The Assemblies try at all costs to avoid changing the constitution, that they may not set an example to their terrible Grand Duke. Thus it is that the parliamentary constitution still retains an indescribably odd mediæval aspect;¹ whilst the nobility, under the pressure of modern life, has given up all its privileges. Thus it is, again, that new classes are little by little formed, that remain unrepresented in the National Assembly.¹.

¹ The National Assembly is divided into four chambers, nobility, clergy, *bourgeoisie*, peasants. For every decision the consent of three chambers is necessary, in some cases that of all four. The power of this assembly, according to the ideas of to-day, is very wide. Its convocation is a right of the Grand Duke (the Emperor of Russia), who calls it together whenever he thinks fit.

Until now Finland has been resigned to all these disadvantages; but these are increasing as reactionary tendencies grow upon the Russian Government. The St. Petersburg police find the protection accorded to individual liberty by the constitution daily more inconvenient. The arbitrary arrest, in 1882, of two Finland citizens at Helsingfors, the capital of the principality, called forth an energetic protest from the Senate. The reactionary party around Alexander III. is always working against the "unjust privileges" of Finland. The rigid protectionists, who have, these last few years, sacrificed all general political interests to those of the manufacturers of Moscow, sing the same song. In Moscow the competition of Finland is looked upon as insurmountable, and the Government, in its weakness, is beginning to multiply the barriers between the empire and the great principality.

Further, the Finlanders are asking themselves, again and again, this question: "What are we getting from Russia? What are the advantages to make us forget the inconveniences of our union with an arbitrary country?" Discontent, hitherto dumb, is being shown more and more frequently in hostile manifestations against Russia,¹ and these manifestations, in their turn, are fresh reasons alleged in favour of a decisive policy by the Russian reactionaries.

This is the situation to-day. The danger is not serious yet; but if the domination of the reactionary party continues at St. Petersburg, very serious com-

¹ In 1885, at Helsingfors, was inaugurated a monument in memory of a Finland general who, when serving in the Swedish army, vanquished the Russians in a skirmish.

plications must be expected. And these are so much the more probable, as between Russia and Finland there are none of those historic ties that cannot be severed without sorrow, without regret.

CHAPTER IV.

Baltic provinces.—Importance of their ports to Russia.—Lithuanian race.—German conquerors.—Land question.—Stupid indifference of the Government.

CROSSING the Gulf of Finland, we find on the opposite shore a territory that is also not purely Russ. Here are the Baltic provinces, Esthonia, Livonia, Courland, reaching on the north to St. Petersburg, and touching on the south Lithuania.

This large tract of land separates Russia from the Baltic, and wholly shuts off her communications with this sea. To these provinces, St. Petersburg excepted, belong all the ports of the Baltic Sea, ports—like Revel, Riga, Windau, Libau, Port Baltic—essential to Russian trade. The western Dwina, one of the largest rivers of Russia, runs into the sea here. Besides, in the Baltic ports end many railway lines that carry goods from provinces the most remote, *e.g.* from the province of Veronëj. The commercial interests of a very large part of Russia are therefore closely bound up with the ports of the Baltic.¹

¹ Riga alone is responsible for one-tenth of our exportation. The trade of Libau in 1883 represented nearly 70,000,000 roubles. The exportation of Revel is 126,000,000 roubles.

The loss of them would mean to Russia the loss of part of her economic independence. That is why she has fought so many wars to retain possession of this country, and why she will never give it up to any other power. Fortunately the interests of the majority of the provinces on the Baltic are identical with those of Russia.

These provinces have been peopled by Lithuanian and Finn races ; but their commercial importance has drawn to them Russians from the most ancient times. In the 11th century, the Dukes of Polotzk and the citizens of the republic of Novgorod possessed part of the country. At the same time the eastward movement of German emigration was beginning. The Crusaders (an order of Livonian knights) seized the Baltic provinces, forcibly baptized the inhabitants, and reduced them to slavery. Conquered at the same time by the Tartars, Russia could not in any way prevent the German invasion. Later on, this order became an independent state, in which the German minority formed the dominant classes (nobility and trading *bourgeoisie*), whilst the majority (the enslaved native population) formed the peasant class.

When Russia was freed from the Tartars, she was cut off from Europe. The Germans of Livonia tried to keep in their hands the monopoly of commerce ; they prevented the science, art, industry of Europe from passing into Russia. In a word, they tried, as long as possible, to keep Russia in a state of barbarism. This egotist policy was not without success : for centuries, it stopped the progress of civilization in Russia. But the necessity to Russia .

of creating for herself an outlet on the Baltic only came out the more clearly. Hence broke out a struggle, lasting nearly two hundred years, for the possession of these provinces. At first it was war with Livonia, then war with Sweden and Poland, that got hold of this district. At last, under Peter the Great, Russia can breathe freely ; she has succeeded in cutting out a window overlooking Europe, and even in opening for herself a wide outlet on this coast.

That is the history of these provinces so essential to Russia.

Is this annexation likely to be lasting ? What are the feelings of the provinces themselves towards Russia ? To answer these questions, it will be useful if I enter into some economic and social details.

Of 2,000,000 inhabitants of the Baltic provinces, the German race can only claim an insignificant minority ; this is shown by the following table :

Percentage	of Natives,	of Germans,	of Russians,	Nationalities.	of other
Esthonia	87·6 . . .	7·9 . . .	4·0 . . .	0·5	
Livonia	87·2 . . .	10·6 . . .	1·7 . . .	0·5	
Courland	79·6 . . .	10·6 . . .	1·6 . . .	8·2	

In spite of their insignificant number, the Germans own *everything* in the country—land, legal rights, power, honours. Trade, industry are in their hands. A glance at the accompanying table shows to what a position the native working population has sunk.

Total territory	8,497,000	deciatines. ¹
Nobility (Germans)	6,168,037	"
The State	1,457,780	"
Peasants (natives)	215,677	"
Clergy (mostly Germans)	90,998	"

¹ A deciatine = 109 ares (100 ares = $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres).

The remainder belongs to the towns, that is, for the most part, to Germans.

In few countries is the distribution of land so unjust as this. Nor must it be forgotten that the nobility in three provinces only number 5,924. To this handful of men belong three-fourths of the soil; only one-fourth is left for the innumerable peasant class. The old social order of the country, left almost untouched by the Russian Government, increases still further the predominance of the German element, by giving up to it the administrative and judicial authority. Add to this the manners of a conquering people, whose wont it is to treat the native population as slaves, and you can form some idea of the condition of the Baltic peasants.

Nowhere in Russia are the people subjected to such arbitrary treatment. The Russian journals are full of proofs of this. In 1885, one Hekken, a landowner, shot dead a certain Krasmus for no better reason than that Krasmus dared to cross Hekken's meadow. The Russian papers made even more stir about a Livonian pastor, who cudgelled a poor herdsman and left him half dead. The herdsman became an idiot. But the fuss made by the journals led to no result. The unworthy servant of God remained unpunished. But the judges of the Baltic are much less indulgent to the natives. According to the newspapers, they have old soldiers, whom the law exempts from corporal punishment, whipped. A justice of the peace condemned a woman—I do not know what was her offence—to exile in a wild forest. The unhappy creature remained there for some weeks with her children.

crying from hunger, without shelter from the rain, the cold, and the forest insects. Of course only the despotic caprice of this pretended justice of the peace invented this extraordinary and barbaric penalty.

The native population has, however, passed the stage in which men bear, without a murmur, such treatment. Among the peasants, especially among the Latichs of the Lethonian race, a powerful national movement is noticeable during the last twenty years. These Latichs, in spite of the efforts of the Germans, have succeeded in working out their language, in creating a literature; they already have some journals, and are demanding equal political and social rights with the Germans. As to the mass of the people, more and more frequently it is beginning to oppose force by force, violence by violence. The last year or two the number of agrarian crimes have called to mind Ireland.

Up to the present time the Russian Government has done almost nothing either on behalf of the natives or for the reform of institutions. The barons of the Baltic provinces hold all the administrative and military posts, and enjoy the favour of the Government.¹ A Russian satire has it: "A German always has a Russian heart; oh, why don't Russians have hearts as Russ?" The Government

¹ The nobility of the Baltic provinces has furnished the Government with a certain number of eminent functionaries. For example, General Todleben, the glorious defender of Sebastopol, who has since bartered this glory for the miserable notoriety gained by his cruel repression of the revolutionary movement at Odessa.

however, accords some little protection to the natives, and is making some hesitating attempts at reforming institutions. Opinion in Russia has always encouraged and protected the national resurrection of the Latichs ; it has always urged the Government to restrain the arbitrary behaviour of the upper classes. As a consequence the Russians are popular enough amongst the native population. It may be said, without fear of error, that any attempt on the part of the Germans to separate the provinces from the empire would meet with energetic opposition from four-fifths of the population.

CHAPTER V.

Poland.—Polish and Russian population.—The Ukraine and White Russia questions.—Historical.—Milioutine's ideas; his agrarian reform.—Ties between Poland and true Russia.—Evil policy of our Government.

IN Lithuania and in Poland the position of Russia is much more complex and much less firm than in the provinces of the Baltic. The insurrection of 1863, and the yet more terrible rising of 1831, are not forgotten. Two more revolutions like these would be enough to make the annexation of these countries a very doubtful matter.

The region as to which Poland and Russia are still in dispute stretches from the Prussian and Austrian frontiers to the banks of the Dnieper, a space of 600,000 square kilometres. It is what is called historic Poland, or the Poland of 1772.¹ But the natural territory of Russian Poland, as well as the area of its influence, is much more restricted. The area of historic Poland is naturally divided into

¹ To reconstitute the Poland of 1772, Galicia and Posen must be added; the former belongs to Austria, the latter to Prussia. At the most flourishing time in her history (the 16th century), Poland was much more extensive—1,176,000 kilometres.

four divisions, socially: Poland proper (123,874 square kilometres), Lithuania (118,452 kilometres),¹ White Russia, and Little Russia, on the Ukraine. The natives of Lithuania are a race apart, having nothing in common with either the Poles or the Russians. The dwellers in White Russia and the Ukraine are two varieties of one great Russian race. What is then the number of Poles scattered over the surface of these territories? The Poles, occupying in a compact mass the territory of the kingdom of Poland, may be reckoned at five million, two or three hundred thousand. In the other provinces the nobility and the *bourgeoisie* alone—in some, the latter alone—are Poles. In the kingdom of Poland the Poles make up 64 per cent. of the whole population; in Lithuania, 10 per cent.; in the Ukraine (on the right bank of the Dnieper), 28 per cent.; in White Russia, 7 per cent. These last numbers certainly have little importance, but the ethnographical composition of a country is not everything.

The Bretons differ as much from the inhabitants of the east of France as the Lithuanians from the Poles. The Alsatians belong to a German race. Bretons and Alsatians are, however, alike French, heart and soul. History reveals to us most clearly the real sympathies of peoples. Let us then inquire into the history of historic Poland.

Russia and national unity arose together in the Ukraine and in White Russia. Kiev, the capital

¹ These are the figures of the administrative divisions, which are certainly not the same as ethnographical and social ones. Hence these numbers are only approximate.

of the former, was called for centuries, in the phrase of the time, "the mother of the Russian towns." At that time sombre forests covered Lithuania, and its inhabitants now submitted to the Russian dukes and now pillaged their domains. Poland proper, absorbed in her continual struggle with the Germans, had few relations with her neighbours of the east. Then, about the middle of the 13th century (1224–1240) occurred a great historic event, producing in oriental Europe a tremendous perturbation. The Tartars ruined and conquered Russia. For the Russian people this is the beginning of ages of slavery; for the Lithuanian princes, fortune. Their power grows gradually; they conquer White Russia, and then the Ukraine. From this time they assume their title of Grand Dukes of Lithuania and of Russia. Simultaneously, Russian civilization predominates in Lithuania to this extent—the Russian language becomes official there.

After saving her nationality in the contest with the Germans, Poland developed enormous social forces. Her people, endowed with so many qualities, swiftly assimilated all that was best in Europe, and founded the most liberal institutions in the whole of Europe. A splendid civilization and freedom in social life drew the sympathies of neighbouring lands towards Poland. In 1386, the clever diplomacy of the Poles succeeded in uniting Lithuania and Poland. At first the union was of dynasties; later it became real. At the same time the Polish language and manners made their way into Lithuania, White Russia, and the Ukraine, at least among the nobility. The constitution of Poland was

absolutely aristocratic; all rights, intelligence, wealth, were concentrated in the ranks of the chliakhta (nobility). As a consequence, Poland only attracted the sympathies of the upper classes, but these latter everywhere very rapidly became Polish. This was the highest point of Poland's political development. In the 16th century, the Baltic provinces, of their own accord, unite themselves to her. In the 17th, Poland comes near to conquering all Muscovite Russia. But the exclusive preponderance of the nobility is hollowing out an abyss doomed to engulf the country.

In its enslavement of the people, the nobility itself loses the love of true liberty: this becomes incompatible with the privileges of the chliakhta. We see in Poland at this epoch religious persecutions, a thing unheard of before. The Jesuits become the teachers most sought after and held in the highest esteem. At the same time the nobles, corrupted by a luxurious and lazy life, lose even their old military and civic virtues.

In the 16th century far-seeing men foretold the ruin of the state. "Retch pospolita (the republic)" cried the great preacher Skarga, "is poverty-stricken. The public treasure is everywhere pillaged to such an extent that the Government does not receive half the imposts. To calculate the calumnies, cheating, treason that rule in the tribunals, is not possible. . . . Does not the bloody sweat of the peasants, streaming without pause, call down God's chastisement on the whole state? Why have not these men the protection of the law and of the tribunals, to safeguard their life, their health, their

goods? Would that I were an Isaiah! I would go barefoot and with rent raiment, crying out upon you, men and women, violaters of the law of God! The walls of your republic are splitting asunder.

. . . In an hour that ye know not, they will fall and crush you all. . . . The enemy from without will come upon you. He will know how to take advantage of your discords. He will say, ‘The hearts of this people are divided, and they shall perish.’ Your dissensions will bring you to captivity, or all your liberties shall pass away and become things of laughter. These lands, these mighty principalities, gathered together, bound aforetime into one simple whole, shall be torn asunder and their bond shall be broken. You that once on a time governed the rest of the nations, shall become for them a plaything, a laughing-stock!”

These sinister prophecies, calling to mind the wrath of the prophets of Israel, were of no avail. Events went forward in their inexorable course.

At the end of the 16th century broke out the rising of the Cossacks of the Ukraine, a fatal event in Polish history. The Ukrainians, to escape the reprisals and the despotism of the nobility, emigrated down the river Dnieper into the inaccessible Zaporojié (a country beyond the cataracts). The emigrants, protected against the Polish army by a hundred leagues of cataracts and by the uninhabitable steppes of Tartary, founded a half-independent republic, that became the centre of a whole series of revolutions in the Ukraine. These revolts lasted nearly a whole century. Often they were suppressed with a cruelty that makes us forget that,

a little earlier, Poland might have been quoted as the most civilized nation in Europe. But all the efforts of the Retch pospolita were useless. The insurgents never stopped. Finally, in 1654, the hetman Bogdan Khmelnitzky, placed himself and all the Ukraine under the protection of the Tzar Alexis I.

The tzars of Moscow accepted the gift; but, after a long war with Poland, gave up half of the Ukraine to her. This was a veritable treason to Russia as well as to the Ukraine. Weakened by long wars, and then dismembered, the unhappy country remained stagnant. For some time all the efforts of its patriots only aimed at repeopling the devastated lands and gaining for the people a little repose. The hatred of Poland was not weakened; the proof of that came in the next century in the terrible revolt of Gonta and Zalizniak. The republic, stricken to earth, had no more power to suppress the insurrection; it asked assistance of Catherine II. Catherine, who had herself in some measure provoked the insurrection, sent her army into the Ukraine. Russian bayonets forced the land under the domination of its foes.¹ It was not for long; the days of the republic were numbered.

Its fall became certain. Everything in the country, except the chliakhta, was downtrodden and degraded. But what was the chliakhta of this epoch? Narouchevitch, a poet and notable

¹ A terrible punishment awaited Gonta. The Poles roasted him alive! This cruelty shows the barbarity of the chliakhta. Even in Russia, Pougatchev, the head of a revolt quite as serious, was by order of Catherine II. merely quartered.

writer of the time, in the celebrated verses, “The voice of the dead,” paints them as follows : “ The holy heritage of the Jagellons and of the Piastes is used to satisfy an ignoble ambition. The crowd of gilded parasites crams the lazy courts. The wealth of the kings has been pillaged—the wind overturns our towns and our strong castles. . . . More warriors, more glory ! . . . Oh, wandering herd of beggars with armorial bearings ! you look upon these cunning great lords, but you don’t understand they are making fun of your folly, that they use you for their own ends, when they break and stick together again your assemblies, bought and sold. You seek freedom ; only the great lords have it. You sell the palladium of our hereditary liberties for a drink, for a courteous bow from a great noble ! ”

Poland was already only an oligarchy. From the mass of the chliakhta a small number of magnates had separated themselves who were kings of the country. The chliakhta, ruined and sunk in ignorance, grouped themselves round these, as clients, armed retainers, even as servants or mere hangers-on. This idle crew gave their voice just as their lords desired, and at times strengthened it by the vote of their sword. Such was the anarchy in the land, the magnates had more soldiers in their pay than the state. The tribunals were powerless to carry out their decrees ; hence the strange phenomenon of the naïezd (irruption, invasion). A man who had a decree of the tribunal in his favour thought he had the right to carry it out for himself. He called together his comrades or his clients and

invaded the domains of his enemy. Of course, right and might were not always on the same side, and in addition naiezd was on many occasions made without any sort of legal decree. The anarchy was especially irremediable owing to the "*liberum veto*," i.e., the right of any one member of the national assemblies to veto the decisions of the majority. Owing to this absurd privilege, reform became impossible, legislative activity was altogether paralysed. The electors of the kings, in the then position of Poland, were so many forced cards, since they were really managed by the intrigues of foreign powers. The neighbouring powers, especially Prussia and Russia, had always their candidates, whom they carried by purchasing the vote of the magnates or of the ordinary chliakhta, or even by force of arms. Poland thus became a toy in the hands of her neighbours, the enemies of reform, desperate with the fear of seeing Poland rise again.

Patriots were not wanting on Polish soil. After 1772, when Russia, Prussia, and Austria had dismembered the country for the first time,¹ Polish patriots united their forces and were successful in 1791 in making a parliamentary *coup d'Etat*, that established the Constitution of the 3rd of May. This constitution decreed hereditary monarchy, the abolition of the *liberum veto*, and gave certain political rights to the *bourgeoisie*. One would have said Poland was saved. But the chliakhta was no longer fit for political life; an insurrection broke out against the new constitution. The powers

¹ One-fourth of the territory and almost one-half of the population of Poland were then taken away.

declared for the insurgents, who represented, they said, "established law and order." The Constitution of May 3 was abolished. A year later the allies recompensed themselves for their restoration of this legal order by a new partition.

From that time, all the noble hearts revolted, and Poland showed that she was wanting neither in talent nor in civic virtues. The hero of her last days, Tadeouch Kosziuchko, recalls to us the mighty figures of antique Rome. But all was useless ; the people did nothing for a republic that held them enslaved, and the chliakhta preferred the loss of their country to the loss of their privileges. Unbelievable thing ! We see the members of the nobility hunting down the peasants of the army of the brave Kosziuchko, who had proclaimed their enfranchisement : "Run away, you boors, to your flails and your ploughs. You must not make war."

Beaten, wounded, a prisoner, Kosziuchko cried out in his despair, "*Finis Poloniæ !*"

A year later the powers shared amongst them the rest of Poland (1795).

This was only, however, the ruin of ancient Poland ; the people had not perished. It may even be said that this rude shock was, in many respects, of value ; it forced the best men in the country to work long years for the social, moral, and intellectual regeneration of the people.

In this direction the progress of Poland is incontestable, and these efforts were crowned with success.

It is at this period of political enslavement that instruction for the first time reaches the masses. The country actually had a considerable number of

educated men, risen from the small *bourgeoisie* and the working class. In a word, the people, as well as the nobility, now formed an integral part of the nation. Literature and science reached the level of European literature and science. Polish industry developed enormously the productive forces of the country. In this connexion the tendency to an organic development has a special importance.

After the insurrection of 1863, when the Russian Government, after exterminating innumerable bands and even whole armies of insurgents, proposed to russify all Poland,¹ the Poles did not lose their heads; they adopted tactics that became very popular and bore fruit. They fought Russia on the battle-ground of progress, and kept up their national unity in trying to crush Russia by the superiority of their culture. Twenty years after the insurrection, Poland surpassed Russia to such an extent that Russian patriots are a little mortified. As to the reactionaries, à la Katkov, they are so discouraged by our impotence to conquer the Polish nationality, that they propose, as the one possible solution, to give up to Germany a part of Poland (the district of Lodseje), or even half the kingdom, with its capital, as far as the Vistula.² Such a measure would be

¹ The persecutions endured by the Poles were horrible. A Pole who remained a Catholic was no longer admitted into the service of the state. In Lithuania, the Ukraine, White Russia, the Polish language was forbidden; in the same way the Poles were forbidden to acquire landed property in these provinces, etc. Russian became, even in Poland, the official language; it was introduced in all the schools, so that the majority of Poles, at the present day, can speak Russian.

² The left bank of the Vistula is the most industrial part of Poland; actually in all the country there are 19,285 manu-

without any doubt a formidable blow to the Poles, by taking half of the provinces away from the influence of Warsaw. Do not these perfidious plans with respect to Russia, Poland, the Slavs in general, show Poland's vital force is enormous? Do not they recall the dying cry of Julian the Apostate, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean"?

This victory cheers the soul of every friend of progress and liberty.

The pretensions of Poland to Little Russia and White Russia, if Poland really raises any, are, it must be said, no more justifiable than formerly. Poland rose twice, in 1831 and in 1863: on each occasion she demanded that all the land as far as the Dnieper should be yielded to her. The upper classes alone showed sympathy with the insurrection. The people, on the other hand, even in White Russia, helped in suppressing the rising. In the Ukraine, hatred of the Poles was universal. In 1831, the Emperor Nicolas I. commanded an appeal to be made to the populations of the Ukraine, and a corps of volunteers to be formed, in order to fight the Polish insurgents. In a fortnight 14,000 men presented themselves, and the movement assumed such huge proportions that Nicolas was terrified, and ordered the recruiting to be stopped. In 1863, the inhabitants of the whole of the Ukraine asked permission to fight the Poles. In face of these facts, the manufacturers, employing 116,029 hands, and producing a revenue of 153,629,209 roubles. The chief market for Polish production is Russia, whose factories cannot stand the competition of the Polish factories. A year ago the Moscow manufacturers asked the Russian Government to establish a series of protectionist duties between Russia and Poland.

claims of Poland to these provinces seem to me quite as little justifiable as the claims of Russia to Poland proper. There is no room for mistake; these provinces will in our conflicts with Poland always range themselves on the Russian side.

Although the insurrections of 1831 and 1863 have of late years given rise to the idea that Poland is always ready to free herself from Russia, nevertheless this idea is not quite accurate. The long period of "organic development," as well as certain governmental measures, has formed sufficiently firm ties between Russia and Poland. The strength of the 1863 rising frightened the Government; Nicolas Milioutine, one of the most celebrated Russian statesmen,¹ took advantage of this moment of fright to get out of Alexander II. a really revolutionary measure: he proposed the lessening of the nobles' power by strengthening that of the peasants. To this end, Milioutine and his friends, Tcherkaski, Soloviev, and others, undertook an agrarian reform in Poland. It is true that Milioutine, broken down by an attack of paralysis, could not finish the reform he had begun; it is true that thereupon this reform was rendered unrecognisable. Nevertheless, landed property underwent very important changes. In 1859 six per cent. only of the peasants in the kingdom of Poland were landed proprietors; the rest paid rent or belonged to the proletarian class (thirty-six per cent. of the population).² About 1874, thanks

¹ See "Un homme d'Etat russe," by M. Leroy-Beaulieu, a remarkable work that I have often found useful.

² "Military Statistics, iv., 213. Janson: Statistics, ii., 178-182."

to these reforms, one-third of the territory passed into the hands of the peasants. Their property in land became thus as great as that of the nobles (that of the peasants rose to 4,716,347 deciatines, that of the nobles, 3,680,847). This reform greatly strengthened the Polish nation; at the same time it enlisted on behalf of Russia the sympathies of a large part of the population.

In their turn the educated classes of the two countries drew together. The repressive measures that trammelled higher education in the kingdom of Poland compelled many of the young men to go to the universities of St. Petersburg and of Moscow. Hence the youth of the two nations were brought into contact. Before this, Poland did not know Russia—a great error on her part. The Poles confounded the Russian people with the Russian Government; they detested them both alike. Now they know that the educated class in Russia has no hatred of the Poles. The works of Russian writers are being translated in Poland, and—a thing unheard of before—Russia and Poland interchange political ideas. Thus, for example, the Polish socialists, when they leave the Russian universities, keep up, for the most part, constant relations with their Russian comrades. Besides, we see a crowd of men in politics and in the liberal professions, who, ~~Poles~~ by origin, work for the interests of Russia while they retain their Polish sympathies. Polish influence plays its part in the development of Russian "liberalism."

Besides these embryonic moral ties between Russia and Poland, an economic bond is springing

up, and growing stronger and stronger. Russia, I have said already, is the chief market for Poland; the Polish manufacturers, therefore, would have everything to fear and everything to lose in a rupture with Russia.

Hence, to my thinking, an insurrection in Poland, with separation from Russia for sole aim, is very improbable. The repressive force of the Russian Government alone may, perhaps, one of these days drive the Poles to take arms. This policy tends to turn Poland into a Russian province, to limit, as much as possible, the rights of its inhabitants (the civil rights of the Poles are always limited by the prohibition against buying land in Little Russia, Lithuania, and White Russia), and to the introduction there of administrative despotism.

Unfortunately none of these causes of discontent has disappeared to-day. Alexander III., immediately after the conference of Skernevitz, declared his fixed resolve to maintain in Poland the old policy. The Russian administration in Poland actually takes measures that seem expressly chosen to excite the people. Sometimes, for example, the head of the police in Warsaw orders that all the work-girls shall be subjected to the same medical inspection as the prostitutes. Sometimes the central Government forms absurd projects; it puts new Russian regiments in the place of those that have been in Poland twenty years, and have, during this long stay, succeeded in establishing with the Poles bonds of friendship and even of kinship. In default of legal guarantees, these personal ties are excessively dear to the Poles. The Government makes a

point of breaking them. Why? This plan takes at once to Polish eyes the aspect of a menace, a forewarning of a whole series of new acts of violence about to fall upon their heads. Russification pursues its course under a yet rougher form. On his last visit to Poland, the emperor could find nothing better to say, to express his satisfaction, than this phrase, "The school-children speak Russian nicely." At the Imperial Theatre, Warsaw, they are mounting Russian operas. In a word, they are showing to the Poles, in a thousand different ways, that they mean to exterminate them as a nation.

Thanks to this policy, it is quite possible that we may yet see the shedding of Polish and of Russian blood on the banks of the Vistula. And the saddest thought is that, without a doubt, such a shedding of blood will be useless and fruitless; the Poles are too small in number to fight the army of the Russian Government.

Their emancipation can only come about as a consequence of the emancipation of Russia.

CHAPTER VI.

Bessarabia. — The Crimea. — The Caucasus and Georgia. — Armenia.—Policy—economic and police—of the Government of such a nature as to involve the loss to Russia of their services.

GOING southwards, we see again a small territory, bordering on Roumania, and by no means Russian. The tzar's ambition has created here a cause of international complications for Russia. The Danube, at whose mouth these lands are situated, runs through Slav and Austrian territory ; it has nothing in common with Russia. Nevertheless, at the time of the last war, Alexander II. thought it necessary to take these lands from the Roumanians—his own allies, —who protested loudly against this injustice. Once free, Russia—it is well-nigh certain—would make haste to give back to the Roumanians this territory, as well as part of Bessarabia.

For the rest, I need not pause upon this microscopic conquest ; nor do I propose to speak at length of the Crimea.

Remembering the Crimean War, the English people may be inclined to think that this peninsula is peopled by Tartars. Now, after the war, the

greater part of the Tartars crossed into Turkey. To-day, throughout the Tauric government—the Crimea forms part of this—only 16 per cent. of the population is Tartar, whilst the Russians are more than 68 per cent.; the rest of the people are Greek, German, Jew, etc.

The national question assumes a much graver importance on the other side of the Black Sea, in the Caucasus. These rich provinces, that formerly served as a route for the great transmigration of the nations, and as a bait for the greed of conquerors, present in these days an extraordinary diversity of races, between whom a terrible animosity exists. This circumstance assures the maintenance of Russian rule in this country.

Northern Caucasus, including the immense basins of the Kouban and of the Terek, is peopled right to the very foot of the mountains by Russians, for the most part Cossacks.

The eastern and central parts of the mountains are at present occupied by natives, amongst whom may be specially noted the Lezghines, the Tchetchenians, the Ossetines, the Svanetes, and lastly, the Kabardians, who are now dwelling in the plain, mixed up with the Russian population.

The mountaineers of the Caucasus belong to the higher races of the human species. All these tribes are remarkable for their beauty, their valour, and their spirit of independence. Some of them, *e.g.*, the Tchetchenians, are really knightly races. They have not even a princely class, and they pride themselves on this equality. The sentiment of honour is developed among them to an astonishing degree;

a Tchetchenian will not bear any insult without avenging it, even at the price of his life.

Whilst I was living at Vladikavkaz, in 1879, the following incident occurred in the town. A Tchetchenian, meeting a Russian officer in the street, thought fit not to give him the wall ; they hustled one another. The officer, furious at this want of politeness, struck the mountaineer ; the latter drew his dagger and killed the aggressor.

Similar things occur constantly. That is why I say that the sentiment of honour is in most of these mountaineers developed to a greater extent than among civilized peoples. The mountaineers are veritably gentlemen. Our great poet, Lermontov, who knew them well, was full of enthusiasm for this race, and often chose from it the types of his heroes. Nevertheless, in spite of these sympathetic qualities, it must be confessed that to make war on them was a necessity for us. All the population, in the main Mahometan, were under the Turkish rule. Turkish garrisons held the fortresses on the shore of the Black Sea. Insurrections by the mountaineers protected the operations of the Turkish army in the Caucasus. The constant war between Turkey and Russia meant, logically, war with the mountaineers. The ceaseless brigandage of these made this still more urgent. These gentry, in fact, have been long distinguished for the boldness of their marauding. To tell the truth, they cannot be called idle. The plains on the borders of the Black Sea were in a much more flourishing state when they were still peopled with mountaineers than they are now. The table-lands of the territory of the Tchetchenians

have a system of canalization so perfect that it is the wonder of Russian engineers. If you go to the heart of the Caucasus, to Kasbek, you find even near this region of snow, amidst brambles and fallen rocks, small pieces of land laboriously tilled, despite the poverty of the soil. Thanks to various historic circumstances, pillage none the less became the custom. It was "good form;" it was courage. Where nature is poor, the mountaineer becomes a veritable bird of prey, strong, bold, but bloody.

"When the stars are shining in the sky
The brave boys of the Caucasus
Make raids.
From grandsire to babe, they live by pillage ;
Where they pass fear is stricken ;
Robbing or lifting—it's all one to them.
They demand new wine and honey at the dagger's point,
And pay for their corn with a pistol-shot."

Thus Lermontov paints the companions of one of his heroines, in an eagle's nest on the top of an inaccessible rock.

These brave freebooters terrified the peoples of the Kouban and of the Terek; but Georgia especially suffered from their inroads, and the systematic war against these mountaineers began soon after the annexation of Georgia.

Georgia is on the southern side of the mountain chain. It occupies the fertile valley of Rion and part of the valley of the Koura. The people of Georgia, as early as the time of Alexander of Macedon, had a real civilization, an elaborate language. The kingdom of Georgia was sometimes master of almost all the Caucasus, sometimes the prey of conquering Arabs, Tartars, or Persians.

In the 17th century, Georgia, devastated by the mountaineers, and still more by the Persians, asked aid of Russia, whose religion was the same as hers. In 1801, the Georgian tsar, George XIII., threatened by Persia, made up his mind to give his kingdom to Russia. From that moment the mountaineers were surrounded by provinces the defence of which against their invasions became the duty of Russia.

Hence at the beginning of this century a fifty years' war against the mountaineers began. With this struggle the name of Schamyl is indissolubly connected. Schamyl is the Abd-el-Kader of the Caucasus; for thirty-five years he was the terror of the Russians. Amongst the mountaineers, this untiring "iman" obtained, by his extraordinary talents and his mighty exploits, an enormous popularity. He knew how to re-unite all the tribes under his authority; for generally mountain tribes are as disunited as it is possible to be. Often each *aoul* (village) is an independent unity, and its relations to its neighbours are rather hostile than otherwise. These continual quarrels between villages even, make it possible for the Russians to gain allies among the mountaineers, who are almost wholly destitute of the sentiment of a national unity.¹

So great is the want of unity among the mountaineers, that Schamyl was compelled to exercise a despotism so severe that the persecutions of our cavilling administration are as nothing by the side of it. In 1859 Schamyl was at last taken, and

¹ E.g., in none of their languages is there a word to express all the Caucasus; the name Caucasus is Russian.

the whole of the eastern Caucasus fell under Russian rule.

For some years western Caucasus preserved her independence; until the time when the Russians adopted a system of barbarous devastation. They went in small bands all over the country, ravaging, burning, slaying everything that came to hand. The Russian Government offered this ultimatum to the unfortunate tribes—emigration to the valley of the Kouban, or extermination. The majority of the mountaineers crossed over into Turkey.

All national questions in the western Caucasus were therefore solved after Tamerlane's fashion. The remnant of the mountain tribes (more than a million souls) is as little Russian as before; it forms a conquered people that, as in the past, hates Russia. The Government has to guard the country by many regiments; and the natives are always ready to seize upon any occasion for revolt.

During the last war, scarcely had the news of the taking of Souakin by the Turks reached Vladikavkaz, than an insurrection broke out in Tchetchenia. The Kabardians, more prudent, waited for the arrival of the Turkish army before they, in their turn, revolted. The insurrection in Tchetchenia was crushed, and many of the chiefs executed; but for a long time the country remained in a state of siege, thanks to the occasional brigandage of the mountaineers. During the Berlin Conference, the boldness of their bands went actually to the length of daring to attack the Vladikavkaz railway station. Even to-day a rising in the mountains is always possible; only the insurrections will never be more

than risings. If the mountaineer fears and detests the Russians, he also detests and despises the Georgians, the Armenians, and the other peaceful tribes of the Caucasus. No alliance among these peoples could be. Besides, the mountaineer has no idea of country and of nationality from our point of view. The following fact will show that plainly enough.

During the Kars expedition, the mountaineer militia refused to fight their co-religionists. The general, to punish them, took away their flags. The mountaineers thereon felt so dishonoured that they supplicated the general to let them be reinstated ; having received permission, they fought with such fury that the commander thought fit to reward them with military honours.

Said an old mountaineer on this subject :

“ It is true the Turks are our co-religionists ; but what of that ? Formerly our young men could distinguish themselves and cover themselves with glory by fighting the Russians. That is now impossible. What is left for them to do ? It is better for them to fight in the ranks of the Russian army than to remain idle.”

It is only through simplicity such as this that great things are effected in politics.

Southern Caucasus, I have already shown, was obliged to seek protection from Russia, and derived some advantage from this alliance. Her rule gave the country security, by means of which it attained a certain degree of prosperity. In the same way Georgia became acquainted with European civilization through Russia. Had she remained a Persian province, Georgia would have presented quite

another aspect. Leaving, however, on one side comparisons with Persia, it must be confessed that Russian rule cannot rouse very warm feelings among the Georgians. A despotic administration weighs heavily on the country's development. The Government, jealous of any thought of national independence, has deprived the Georgian Church of its former autonomy. The institutions of the zemstvo and of the jury,¹ enjoyed by the Russian provinces, have not been introduced into the Caucasus. The censorship crushes the press and literature of the country. The government opposes an invariable "No" to all the petitions from Georgia for the founding of a university at Tiflis. The economic interests of the Caucasus are also sacrificed, sometimes in very cavalier fashion, to the interests of Russian industry. The suppression of transit through the Transcaucasus² is a conclusive example of this policy. If, therefore, Russia has done some good services to Georgia, this constant pressure on her part prevents the ulterior development of the annexation, and irritates the people with it.

In Armenia this irritation is so much the greater, as this country has received almost nothing that can compensate for the inconveniences of Russian rule.

Almost all Armenia is tributary to Turkey.³ Once on a time independent, and even with a certain degree of civilization, Armenia has yielded to

¹ Zemstvos are provincial assemblies; these will be spoken of further on.

² That is, through Georgia, Armenia, and the Persian provinces.

³ Armenia has a territory of 280,000 square kilometres, a population of 3,000,000.

the Turkish conquerors. In the organization of her Church alone she preserved a kind of national organization, because the Katolikos¹ was always a natural representative of the people to the Ottoman Government, and enjoyed a certain amount of temporal power. As soon as the Armenian provinces—the Government of Erivan, of Kars, and even Etchmiadzine, the residence of the Katolikos—were subject to the Russian empire, the importance of the Katolikos lessened, at all events in these provinces ; and this could not but be disagreeable to the Armenian patriots.

Truly, as compensation, on this side the Russian frontier they can work with the greater ease for the resurrection of Armenia as a nation ; but the more completely obedient the Armenian provinces are to Russia, the less favourable is its Government to propaganda of this kind. Lately it has grown so suspicious that it has begun to make reprisals. For example, immediately after the annexation of Kars, the Government closed the Armenian schools there. At first this was thought to be a clumsy act, due to the individual stupidity of some official. But time passed, and it was soon clear that it was part of a system ; already a thousand schools have been closed in this way. It is easy to imagine the anger and desolation of the people, who are losing the national schools that they kept even under the Turkish yoke. These brutal attempts at Russification

¹ The dogmas of the Armenian-Georgian Church differ as much from those of Roman as from those of Greek Catholicism. The Katolikos, head of the Armenian Church, is entitled “ His Holiness.”

anger the people the more, in that the emperors themselves have always favoured the national movement in Armenia.

"For ten years," says an Armenian proclamation recently issued, "the Russian despots have promised us, upon the guarantee of their own signatures, the independence of the country of Ararat; they have promised us that they would restore the ancient constitution of Ani and of Vagarachpad, their glory and their rule. And now they deny, like cowards, their own signature; and in place of these fine promises, add to the ruins of Ani's monuments the ruins of our schools."

Thus the discontent in the land is growing. As yet we do not hear of an appeal to arms, because the struggle of the Armenians alone against Russia would only be a forlorn hope. Nevertheless, it is very probable that the Armenians will try to separate themselves from Russia if external complications are favourable. The consequences of this attempt would be so much the more serious as, all the commerce of the Caucasus being in the hands of the Armenians, they would of necessity try also to detach Georgia from Russia. An alliance between Georgians and Armenians is, however, not likely, on account of the constant rivalry between the two peoples; but the despotism of conquerors is a powerful means of teaching to the oppressed a reciprocal solidarity.

To sum up, the position of Russia in the Transcaucasus is not very secure. It may be said that the best reason for the maintenance of Russia's rule is the great weakness of all her neighbours and

the want of power in the Georgian and Armenian national parties, who do not know the secret of relying on the economic interests of the people. The proclamation I have just quoted, cries out, "Without our church and our schools we are lost!" Certainly great national movements call for larger formulæ than this. The Poles asked much more than church and schools, and we saw how strong a weapon against the Polish revolution the Russian Government found in stirring up to some extent the land question.

CHAPTER VII.

Turkestan.—Indigenous populations.—The Russian Government only knows how to conquer.—Conflict with England ; commercial and—one of these days—military.

CROSSING the Caspian Sea, we still find on its eastern shore large tracts of land where the Russian empire overflows far beyond its natural boundaries. These are the deserts and oases of Central Asia, or Turkestan.¹ There but a few years ago was a whole series of independent states, with the towns of Kokan, Samarkand, Tashkend, Bokhara, Khiva, Merv. Impoverished and fallen into decay, if their present is compared with their glorious past, these lands have, however, retained some remnants of culture, and have sometimes, as in the case of Bokhara, passed for the capital of Mahometan science.

The social condition of all these countries is not very attractive ; it is of the eastern autocrat type,

¹ This country is probably the bed of a sea that has dried up. The great lakes known as the Seas of Aral and Caspian are the remains of this sea. Two important rivers, the Sir-Daria and the Amou-Daria, flow down from the mountains of China across Turkestan, into the Sea of Aral. The Sir-Daria may be looked upon as the natural boundary of Russia's influence ; but her rule has gone far beyond this boundary to the south, as far as Afghanistan.

in which the conqueror Ouzbecks rule the conquered Sartes, and are themselves under the despotism of their khans. The effeminate dynasties of the latter have neglected all the interests of the people,¹ and are stained with the most infamous vices of the East. The slave-markets of Khiva and Bokhara have only been suppressed by the Russians. So great at times was the number of the slaves, that their revolts were fatal to states. As to the rest of the population, they busy themselves partly with agriculture, partly live the life of nomads, traversing the deserts with their flocks.

Everywhere agriculture is in a parlous condition. To cultivate the land properly, it must be well watered; and frequently the irrigation canals are out of order, often even completely choked up by the sand of the desert.

The brigandage of the nomadic tribes has long made all commerce impossible; it has even disturbed our fishermen on the Caspian Sea.

Merv is a nest of birds of prey; its inhabitants, the Tekins (of the Ouzbek race), celebrated for their courage, have spread terror throughout Central Asia, devastating it by their constant invasions.

As the steppes of Siberia are not separated from Central Asia by any natural boundaries, the invasions

¹ M. Elisée Reclus, in his magnificent "Géographie," praises highly the conduct of those Governments in Central Asia that confiscate the lands of those unwilling to cultivate them. In this wise law, however, we must not think we see the care of the khans for the well-being of their people; it is only a necessary consequence of the social principles of the Koran. But these principles are violated in Central Asia, so that, at Khiva, half the cultivated land belongs to the khan and his courtiers.

of Russian possessions by the nomads were of daily occurrence. This it was that made necessary Russian intervention in the affairs of Central Asia. Russia had once for all to tame the independent nomads, and to compel the khans of Kokan, Bokhara, and other towns to pay a little more attention to what their subjects were doing. Besides the necessity of employing armed force to protect her own people, Russia had to perform a mission of civilization ; she had to contribute to the creation of order in Central Asia.

Unfortunately the imperial Government has not shown itself capable here, any more than in the Caucasus, of creating on the frontier a series of states whose very interests should make them faithful allies of Russia. The Government has not known how to manage conquests, as easy as immense.

In 1865 Tashkend was taken ; in 1868, Samarkand and Bokhara ; in 1873, Khiva ; in 1881, Merv.

Thus the whole of Central Asia belongs to the Russians.

At the heart of this territory, Bokhara and Khiva still enjoy a shadow of independence ; all the rest is under Russian administration, and is a Russian province.

Thus it is that the “white wolves”¹ are to-day face to face with the English at the gates of India.

This movement, from the military point of view, has presented many brilliant episodes. But what

¹ The Russians have this nickname in Central Asia on account of the white uniform of their army in Turkestan.

is the political meaning of it? That is not easy to see.

The Turkestan countries have lost nothing in the loss of their independence. Russia has abolished slavery there, has put an end to brigandage; she keeps a certain order that allows the people to work in safety. At Tashkend and elsewhere, Russia has equalized the rights of the Sartes and of the Ouzbeks. Finally, our conquests have shown the peoples of Asia the advantages of civilization. This will have its influence on them mentally.

What profit has Russia made out of her conquests?

Our protectionists are trying to create there a market for our produce. This market does not at present bring in enough to keep up the administration of the country. In 1867 the whole of the Russian commerce with Turkestan was only twenty million roubles. Since then it has without doubt increased considerably; but the account with Tashkend, the centre of Russian commerce in Central Asia, was in 1873 only nineteen million roubles. The commercial account between Russia and Khiva does not exceed three millions. The total exportation from Turkestan in 1882 was exactly three million roubles; and in this our manufactured products only figured as 160,000 roubles. These figures are not astonishing if we bear in mind that the total population of Central Asia does not exceed seven millions, for the most part very poor. Besides, the competition of England is not overcome; sometimes even she drives Russian goods out of the markets of Central Asia.

Finally, the economic conquest does not necessarily accompany the military. In fact, the latter is only the result of an ambition the Government has not the strength to restrain, an ambition that has already created at several places on the frontier a very strained and dangerous situation.

CHAPTER VIII.

National feeling in the Ukraine.—Chevtchenko and the Nationalists contemporary with him.—Popular aspirations.—The Nationalists do not satisfy these.—M. Dragomanov and his influence.—Summary and conclusion.

To complete this examination of the question of nationalities in Russia, it only remains for me to say a few words on the national movement in the Ukraine.

The colossal figure of the celebrated poet Chevtchenko, who died in 1861, is indissolubly connected with this movement.

Born a serf, and condemned later by the Emperor Nicolas I. to a terrible exile, Chevtchenko felt boiling within his soul all the hate of his oppressed people. He was a Cossack to his finger-ends. His verse is red with the flame of burning dwellings, with the blood of the massacred.

In spite of his genius, Chevtchenko was almost solitary. The Ukrainian Nationalists of his time were busied in forming, not a popular party, but rather an educated Ukrainian class, a language and a national theatre. They were aiming rather at the autonomy of the Ukraine than at the autonomy of the Ukrainians,

The people will understand Chevtchenko much better than the Nationalists his contemporaries. His outpourings have a purely social character. They touch on the land question, the suppression of village monopolizers, on the despotism of state officials, and the like. The people in no wise concern themselves with the national question, strictly so called. The Ukrainians are more capable than the people of any other region of Russia of making manifest their desires and their protestations. They have never shown any separatist leaning. The Nationalists of the Ukraine confess themselves that the people no longer remember the Cossack state, whose creation was half completed in the time of the hetmans.¹ More than that, the name of the hetman Mazeppa, who aimed at separating the Ukraine from Russia, is even at this hour used as an outrageous insult in the Ukraine.

The Nationalist tendencies are only seen, therefore, in certain circles of literary society in the Ukraine.

The most remarkable representative of these tendencies at the present time, is M. Dragomanov, formerly professor at the University of Kïev, a man of great talent and rare erudition. Forced to leave Russia, he is now the soul of the Ukrainian Nationalist circle Gromada (commune or assembly). This circle, which to my certain knowledge has not been up to this present moment dissolved, propagated its ideas with great boldness, and published many books and pamphlets in the Ukrainian language. It has not been able to gain the slightest

¹ Dragomanov. "The Spirit of the Political Songs of Modern Ukraine (in the Ukrainian tongue)," p. 10.

political power. Just now, M. Dragomanov is busy-ing himself with organizing a new circle, Vilna Spilka (the Free League). This has not as yet given any sign as to its existence and its influence.

In a word, in speaking of Russia, we need not take into account, at present, the nationalist Ukrainian movement, which is not a *national* movement.

It may, however, be supposed, that if the Government continues to suppress all movement of ideas in Russia, and to prevent the social development of our party, Nationalist tendencies will gain ground in the Ukraine, and even become separatist in nature. On the contrary, if Russia pursues a steady march of development, we may foretell that this movement will never go beyond a certain literary and artistic renaissance, will never become a political one.

To sum up. The results of this investigation are as follows. From the point of view of national unity, Russia is very strong in the heart of the land; at the frontiers her strength most frequently diminishes immensely, sometimes even becomes *nil*.

By transcending its natural limits of growth, the Russian empire has acquired an Achilles' heel, by the weakness of which a clever enemy may profit. But even then the question of nationalities does not among Russians present the same extreme perils as it presents in other states. Animosity to Russia, in fact, exists very often among the upper classes alone. The masses very rarely feel any such sentiment.

Finally, if some powerful foe should take away from Russia the major part of her non-Russian provinces, such an amputation would be more advantageous for her than inconvenient.

BOOK II.
RUSSIAN RUSSIA.
GERMANS AND JEWS.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I. Russia considered physically.—Influence of its unity of climate and soil on the unity of the Russian people.—Influence of the struggle for life on this unity.—Differences of provincial types.—The three great Russian races.

CHAP. II. Characteristic traits of these three races, as shown in their popular songs and tales.—Differences of dialect.

CHAP. III. The Cossacks.—Their part in history.—Organization of the Cossack army.—Policy of the Government in respect to the Cossacks.—Discontent to which this has given rise among them.

CHAP. IV. Germans and Jews.—German pretensions to have civilized Russia.—Great influence on Russian policy of the Germans of the Baltic.—German labour colonies.—The part they have played in southern Russia.—The Jews.—Their importance as part of the people.—Their despised position.—Polish and Caucasian Jews.—Rights of domicile.—Jews in the administration and in the schools.—Economic *rôle* of the Jews.—Their poverty and their plundering.—The Semitic question.—The means to its solution.

CHAPTER I.

Russia considered physically.—Influence of its unity of climate and soil on the unity of the Russian people.—Influence of the struggle for life on this unity.—Differences of provincial types.—The three great Russian races.

THE physical and historical conditions under which a people evolves, have as powerful an influence upon it as education has on the individual.

When, a thousand years ago, the Slavs for the first time got footing in the western part of Russia, they found there enormous spaces stretching before them to the east, sometimes very sparsely populated by savage tribes, sometimes absolute deserts. No barrier rose between them and those territories that extended across the Oural almost to the Pacific Ocean.

Nowhere in this vast area was there a mountain. The Russian mountains are only small hills, like Primrose or Haverstock Hill, and for the most part the Oural seems more a plateau than a mountain chain. Only on their actual boundary lines could the Russians strike against the Carpathian mountains, the Caucasus, the Altai, the mountains of eastern Siberia, or come to a pause on the shores

of the Arctic Ocean, the Black Sea, or the Pacific Ocean. Nowhere else in the limitless expanse would the pioneers meet an obstacle by the way. On the contrary, the Dnieper, the northern Dwina, the Don, the Volga, whose affluents reach almost to Siberia, a complete network of huge rivers, formed a natural means of communication.

Thus the march of the Russians eastwards became inevitable. It is always more enticing to occupy virgin soil than to cultivate with infinite labour that which others have already worked out. Hunters and fishermen—these professions were the most general—were also of the same opinion.

Sometimes, also, the Russians moved eastwards for certain commercial reasons.

This movement was so much the more easy since they found everywhere the same physical conditions as in their old dwelling-place.

The climate of the whole of Russia is uniform : a dry climate, continental, with regular, strongly marked seasons. The difference between the temperature of the north and south, 70° and 40° N. lat., is certainly immense ; but, thanks to the regular succession of the seasons, it is attained almost imperceptibly. The inhabitant of Archangel knows harsh winters and warm summers ; the average temperature in July is 15.9° (Réaumur). The inhabitant of the south has torrid summers, and winters that are severe ; at Novotcherkask, the mean temperature in January is 8.6° above zero.

On account of these climatic conditions, those of labour are to a certain extent the same throughout the whole land. “A warm summer makes agri-

culture possible in regions where, judging from the average yearly temperature alone, the possibility of it would never have been admitted. At Mezen, where this average is 0° , barley ripens in summer. At Yakoutsk, where the average temperature is about -11.4° , and where the earth from three feet down is always frozen, the summer heat (14.3° on the average) allows even wheat to ripen.”¹

As to the nature of the soil, similar observations might be made.

Physically, Russia is divided into two regions : the northern zone, covered with marshes and forests ; the southern, occupied by the steppes.² Certainly the rural economy of these two regions presents great diversity. This economy, however, only works within the limits of the cultivation of cereals. The Russian race scarcely ever passes beyond the limits of the zone of cereals and of this continental climate. That is why the peasant of the Kostroma forests, transplanted to the steppes of Samara, finds no difficulty in conforming to the conditions of his new position ; he keeps up his old habits, introducing some trifling changes.

We see then that the Russian people could spread over a wide area without passing the boundaries of a territory in which the physical conditions are similar. This favourable condition to unity has been strengthened again by historic circumstances.

¹ Janson. “Statistics,” vol. i. p. 15.

² The whole of the middle zone, lying between the forests of the north and the steppes of the south, has a magnificent *tcher-nozjom* (black soil), that yields, without any manure, magnificent crops.

When they settled on the Volga, the Dwina, the Don, or the Obi, the Russians mingled with and subjugated the aborigines. But the aborigines were so inferior to the Russians, even in race, that the latter were involuntarily penetrated with the consciousness of their national superiority—a sentiment that is always the best guarantee of a people's unity.

A serious event once again forced the Russians to union, this time purely as the result of calculation. Their march eastwards came into collision with one that was going in the opposite direction—the march westwards of the nomads of Asia. The collision that followed lasted almost nine hundred years. The absolute necessity of a common struggle and defence developed in the people the tendency to unity and co-operation. Finally, a very important fact, the Russians were and still are, from a certain point of view, an excessively mobile population. They do not stay long in one and the same place. The inhabitants of the different provinces were constantly commingling, and as a consequence never came to form strongly marked provincial types and races. Thus all the physical and historical conditions contributed to the development of national unity and the creation of a uniform type.

Nevertheless, in a period ranging over some thousand years, the Russian people could not but create some provincial types, whose differences result in some places from diversity of races, in others from social conditions.

Thus the dwellers in the north, especially the *pomors* (dwellers on the sea-shore), sprung from the citizens of the republic of Novgorod, never knowing

slavery, trained by their calling to the dangers of the Arctic Ocean, gave rise inevitably to a special type, distinguished by its valour and its independence. At Viatka, formerly a colony of Novgorod, but with a population largely mixed with Finnish elements, certain peculiarities are noticeable in the manners and even in the language. The miners of the Oural are clearly marked off from the labourers of the steppes. They are much more developed and more alert.¹ The Siberiak (inhabitant of Siberia), who has always played, and plays to-day, the part of pioneer and colonist, who has never suffered slavery, is more of a barbarian than a European Russian, but is, on the other hand, more independent.

I shall not pause to depict the distinctions between the provincial types. The description would take up too much space, and would be of but little use, since, as I have said, they are not sufficiently marked to have any political importance.

The characteristic Russian types must detain us longer.

Considered from the social point of view, these types are the Great Russians (*Veliko Russians*), the Little Russians (*Malo Russians*), and the White Russians (*Biélo Russians*). From the point of view of social life, the Cossacks must be placed in a class by themselves.

¹ This relatively higher development may be judged from the following figures. In one agricultural village, the popular library of the zemstvo lends 233 volumes dealing with religious questions, 374 with science or literature; the library of the mines gives out for 252 pious works, 1,460 volumes on scientific or literary subjects.

CHAPTER II.

Characteristic traits of these three races as shown in their popular songs and tales.—Differences of dialect.

THE oldest of the three Russian races is the race of the White Russians ; the youngest, that of the Great Russians. But in history the latter play the general part of younger brothers in Russian tales. The youngest brother is always represented as the most energetic of the three, able to do all sorts of things beyond the power of his elders. This race occupied the greatest part of Russia, and took the lead in the formation of our national unity. By degrees, also, it has become the most numerous. The Great Russians are to-day nearly forty-eight millions in number ; the Little Russians more than fifteen millions. The oldest branch has stopped growing, as if dried up ; it has not enlarged its old territory by a foot, and only numbers at the present moment four million people. One might say that the cruel vicissitudes of its history have succeeded in crushing it.

The domination of Lithuania and of Poland, the predominance of the aristocracy, weighed so heavily on the White Russian people, that resistance seemed

impossible. "Our ancestors were slaves. All the world calls us serfs; every one is the master of us," groans one of their poets. In fact, White Russia has never opposed any resistance to her oppressors.

None the less, it cannot be said that this people is incapable of anything. At the bottom of its soul it is far from being a slave. He that reads the poetry of the Biélo Russians will be astonished to find in it a beauty, a poetic love of nature and of man; finally, and yet more astonishing, a clear understanding of human dignity.

In spite of centuries of slavery, the Biélo Russian does not at all recognise the superiority of his lord. Sometimes even he makes fun of him.

One of their White-Russian songs tells the adventures of a *chliakhtitch* (Polish noble). He is destitute of all military virtues, and occupies himself with housekeeping.

"A carroty liachek [a little Pole]
Mounted a beetroot horse."

This Pole, moreover, had bullets of potato, that were one day eaten up by the pigs, so that he had nothing left with which to defend himself.

One story wittily compares the ideas of a White Russian with those of a noble. A *pane* (noble), meeting a peasant, asks him, "Whose are you?" i.e., "Who is your master?" The peasant pretends not to understand. He answers, "My father's and mother's." The *pane*, not thinking that the reply is ironical, explains anew his meaning. "I am asking you who is the greatest in your village?" The peasant answers, "Gossip Avdei is the tallest in our

place." The *pane* grows vexed, thinks the peasant stupid, and resolves on again changing the form of his question. "Of whom are you afraid?" "Our priest has a very nasty dog," the peasant answers; "every one in our place is afraid of it. They carry sticks if they have to go near it."

Whilst the Biélo Russian by no means recognises at heart the nobles' superiority, he never opposes to them any overt resistance. It is difficult to know what easy goodnature prevents him from having recourse to violence, even in his own defence. Among this people, the songs of home life are full of complaints of husband against wife, wife against husband; but all this grumbling rarely goes beyond complaints, and never as far as violence. This is the way, for example, in which it shows itself. Sometimes the daughter-in-law rejoices that her mother-in-law has tumbled into the nettles; sometimes the husband prays the rain to soak his wife through and through. But with all this malicious fun, the White Russian is notable for a sort of knowledge of his own weakness, for a conviction that the predominance of evil is the resistless law of life.

The songs of the Great Russians often express anguish. This anguish is generally caused by some isolated fact that might, and even should, not exist.

For the Great Russian, sorrow is an unfortunate accident. The pains of the Biélo Russian are less acute, but they are hopeless. The Biélo Russian is not cast down by his grief, simply by reason of the conviction that this misfortune is inevitable. And he makes no protest; only sometimes he makes up his mind to invoke the aid of Heaven.

"Holy Virgin, mother of the Russian land! Thy power is great here and on high; thy hands can save the sinner from a punishment too severe. Let me not perish!"

But the Biélo Russian cannot even find consolation in religion.

A poem of the Great Russians represents a combat between Injustice and Justice, in which victory remains, it is true, with Injustice—who thenceforth reigns on earth—but in which, nevertheless, Justice does not perish; she only passes from earth to heaven. They have also a beautiful story of Misfortune pursuing without ceasing a man until he finds rest in a monastery: "Misfortune pauses on the threshold of holy doors."

On the other hand, the Biélo Russians cannot have much hope even in the power of a Supreme Being. Their anthropomorphic god is often nothing more than a stanovoï (commissary of rural police).

Let us see something of the justice, the humanity, these unhappy mortals find in heaven.

Once upon a time, says one of their popular stories, a soldier died. He had done such good service in his life-time, that the tsar knew him, and had often made him his orderly. When the soldier turned up in the other world, God also gave him the berth of orderly, and told him to announce visitors.

One day Death came to get his orders from God. Through the soldier, God ordered him to kill for three years middle-aged men. The soldier took pity on these unfortunates, and resolved on a lie. He told Death that God's orders were that for

three years he was to gnaw middle-aged oaks. Death, in spite of his astonishment, dared not disobey the orders of the Most High. For three years he destroyed assiduously oak-forests, and at the end of the time appeared again before God. The soldier did not let him reach God, and asked him what he wanted. "Ask God," said Death to him, "to be good enough to give me a less troublesome job; for this one has given me a lot of trouble, I assure you." The soldier took God the message, but said never a word about gnawing oak-trees.

"Good!" said God. "Let him go back to earth and kill little children for three years. And he must try and kill them properly, not like these last three years, in which he has done nothing. It seems he's growing lazy, this Death."

The soldier gave this order as follows:—

"God is cross. You have gnawed the oaks ill. He only pardons you on account of your old age. Now go and gnaw the young oaks for three years."

Death went away, and again set to work.

At the end of three years he returned, quite exhausted. He had no longer any confidence in the soldier, and wanted to see God Himself. He made such a noise, that God came hurrying into the passage. The soldier saw he was lost. When God saw Death, He began grumbling. He said to him that, thanks to his idleness, there had been no death on earth for the last six years. Explanations followed, and God's anger was turned against the soldier. The Master of the universe, in His irritation, inflicted upon him a severe punishment. To

chastise his excess of humanity, the soldier was to carry Death across the earth on his shoulders. Resistance was useless. He must resign himself to this sad lot. Yet the soldier's heart still suffered, and he ever sought for means by which he might help men. Soon chance gave him an opportunity. It was his habit to take snuff. One day Death asked him why he did it. The soldier answered that the snuff made him strong, and that but for it he would not have been able to carry Death. Death seemed very glad to know of this strengthener : he asked the soldier to give him a pinch.

"It'll do me good, perhaps," said he ; "I have a difficulty in breathing."

"It's true," answered the soldier, "that this 'll do you a lot of good ; but if you only take it as I do, you will have to wait a long while for any result. You will do better if you throw yourself right into my snuff-box, and stop there some time. In three days you will be quite well."

Death followed his advice. The soldier shut him up in his snuff-box, and carried him about for the three years, so as not to transgress the command of God. Thus were men once more saved.

How many times have the Biélo Russian serving-men, in the goodness of their hearts, had to resort to like ruses to save their brothers, the peasants, from the blind anger of their masters !

The goodnature of the Biélo Russians, that never seems to me to be capable of changing into indignation or anger, is a trait of Russian character generally, only carried to an extreme in them. The Great Russians, as well as the Little Russians, are

not at all vindictive, and are quite as gentle. Russians, from the point of view of humanity, and of the interest they take in the misfortunes of others, might set an example to many a philanthropist. To all criminals they give the name "nestchastnenkîe" (poor unfortunates). Nor is this a mere phrase. The best observers of the life of the people, the best Russian artists, have noticed this trait of national character. But there is on this point a great difference between the Great and the Little Russian; the latter is somewhat sentimental, the former not at all. The Great Russian acts from conviction rather than the impulse of sentiment. He never says anything sentimental if he feels any real emotion; the Little Russian very often does. But, on the other hand, if the Great Russian is irritated, in despair, in a passion, he is capable of a cold cruelty inconceivable on the part of the other. It is curious, for example, to compare how the songs of the two races tell the same fact—the poisoning of a faithless lover by a young girl.

The Little Russian Maroussia poisons her lover Gritz, but she loves him all the while. She even calls him Gritzenko—a caressing diminutive. She recounts in detail all the preparations for this terrible action, she tells also all that which happens after the death of Gritz; but she says nothing of the actual deed, nothing but the words, "Gritz is dead." It is clear that for her to recall the details of this death is too great a pain.

The young girl of the Great Russian song, on the other hand, dwells at length on all the tortures of her poisoned lover; such is her cruelty, that even in

the midst of his torments she asks him, "Now, my darling, tell me what is on your mind?" It is as if she cannot satiate her revenge, as if she finds a melancholy joy in dwelling on every detail of her vengeance. Such cruelty, it is true, is rare in the songs of the Great Russians, but in those of the Little Russians, as far as I know, there is no instance of the like.

The Little Russian is more gentle; he has more of the characteristic traits of the south. He has energy, but it is by fits and starts, and very readily the meditative inaction of the lazzerone takes its place. The energy of the Great Russians is that of perseverance. "In their songs," says our celebrated historian Kostomarov, "the force of will takes on a lofty and poetic character. . . . The best Great Russian songs are those that tell of the movements of a soul gathering together all its forces, as symbolical of triumph, or of the defeat that does not crush the force within."¹ Of this nature is the magnificent bandit song, "The Forest of Green Oaks." A brave "peasant-son," who has perchance avenged the outrages heaped upon his enslaved brethren, is about to appear before the tzar and be cross-examined there. He is pondering beforehand on his answers, that he may not betray his comrades—that he may take a stand so lofty that the tzar himself, as he sends him to the gallows, may be forced to say, "Honour to thee, brave boy and peasant-son!"

This inward strength finds much feebler expression in the Little Russian songs. But, generally

¹ "Monographs," vol. i. p. 92.

speaking, Little Russia is the greater poet. Her songs are unrivalled for beauty of form, delicacy of sentiment, charm of melody. The Little Russian feels very keenly his rights and dignities as an individual. On this account he is naturally ready always to protest against all despotism. The revolts of the Ukraine shook, as I have said, the power of Poland. The Little Russians protested against the tendency of their Starshina (chiefs of the Cossack armies) to form an aristocracy. Finally, the popular revolutionary movements actually manifest themselves more in the south, in Little Russia.

The Little Russian is a profound democrat, a champion of equality, which does not prevent him from being at the same time something of an individualist, and from taking especial care that another man does not own more than he does. The Great Russian is not less a democrat, but he is a man sociable to the core. He cannot imagine a life outside his society, outside the *mir*. Sometimes the Little Russian says, "What belongs to all belongs to the devil." The Great Russian says, "The Mir is a fine fellow. I will not desert the Mir. Even death is beautiful in common!" and so forth. To betray the commune is the greatest possible, the one unpardonable sin.¹ The ideas of public safety, of the popular will, penetrate the whole being of the Great Russian, and take in him the severe aspect of duty. He protests less against despotism than against injustice. From the idea of the public welfare he deduces that of his rights.

¹ The celebrated Niekrrassov, a Great Russian by birth, worked out this idea admirably in one of his best pieces.

*The Little Russian, on the contrary, reaches the idea of the public welfare by taking as his starting-point the exigencies of his individual right. The Great Russian is a man of discipline, an excellent organizer—qualities wanting in the Little Russian, who finds great difficulty in giving up his individual independence, even if the sacrifice is for the common weal.

The genius of the Little Russian is apt at combinations, but too lazy to look into the future. He easily confuses things he wishes to happen with those that ought to happen. "Don't look at the game," says he; "let's lead trumps." The practical genius of the Great Russian has, on the other hand, a well-deserved reputation. He at once tells the possible from the impossible, and loves to act on a plan completely thought out beforehand. The Great Russian is crafty, but he likes to wear the mask of good nature. The Little Russian is very frank, but he likes to assume an air of cunning. This characteristic is cleverly brought out in a popular tale, made up, without a doubt, by the Great Russians.

Once upon a time, a village Khokhol¹ came to town. He stared in wonderment at the houses, the churches. . . . His attention was caught by a sight he had often seen in his own village—a flock of crows perched on a steeple. Out of sheer idleness he began to count them. On a sudden the angry cry of a soldier rang out:

¹ Khokhol is literally "a lock of hair." The Great Russians call the Little Russians thus after the great lock of hair the Cossacks leave on their shaven skulls. The Little Russians, who wear no beard, answer to *quolibet* by *quolibet*; they call the Great Russians, on account of their long beards, Katsap (like a goat).

“What are you doing there, Khokhol ?”

“I am counting the crows.”

“And how dare you count the crows of the Government ?”

The soldier began to roar. The Khokhol was frightened and began to apologise. The soldier told him categorically that for every crow counted ten kopecks had to be paid.

“How many crows have you counted ?”

“Nearly ten.”

“Then pull out your purse and give me a rouble.”

The Khokhol gave the money asked for ; and the soldier, mighty proud of his victory, went to the tavern to get a drink with the simple peasant’s money ; whilst the Khokhol, equally satisfied with himself, smiled and murmured, as he watched the soldier go :

“I’ve done you nicely, Moscal (Muscovite). I counted at least a hundred crows, and I’ve only paid for ten !”

Each nationality has a large number of anecdotes of this kind about the other, but there is no need to conclude from this that there is any serious enmity between Great and Little Russians. As a rule, they get on very well together. In the south of Russia there are enormous territories peopled by a mixture of these two nationalities, and there are never any collisions between them. In certain places the commingling of the two is very complete. Sometimes even the same song cannot be heard in pure Great or in pure Little Russian. It is easy to recognise in its original idiom—made up of a mixture of sounds, accents, turns of phrase borrowed from the

two languages—the language of both shores of the Sea of Azov, Stavropol, or the Crimea. In like manner in the south we recognise the mixture of manners and customs belonging to the two nationalities.

As to the language, it is necessary to remark that the difference is not so great that the Biélo Russians, the Little Russians, and the Great Russians cannot understand one another. But each of their tongues has sounds, words, turns of phrase peculiar to it, and this is enough to give rise to *quid pro quos*. The Little Russians, for example, tell a story of the laughable position of a Great Russian soldier lodging at a Little Russian's. He had much appreciated a dish of his hostess, called varenniki. He asked her its name. The woman, vexed at the presence of a compulsory guest, only growled between her teeth : “Jri movtchki!” (“Eat, and hold your tongue!”). Some time after, the soldier, now friendly with his hosts, asked the hostess in vain to get him some “jrimovtchkis” again. Anxious as she was to please him, she could not guess what he wanted.

It is clear, of course, that a pun proves nothing. Most frequently, Great and Little Russians can understand one another, although they cannot keep up a rapid conversation.

The Great Russian tongue is divided into four dialects. One of these scarcely differs from the Biélo Russian language; another is closely akin to the Little Russian. Generally, our scientific men hold that Great Russian was once a branch of Biélo Russian. This explains still better the ease with

which Great and White Russians understand one another. Besides, in studying Russian types, it must not be forgotten that their differences are only family ones. In the faces of three brothers you always notice many different characteristics ; but if you compare these brothers with strangers, the family characteristics are very noticeable. Compared with a German, the Great Russian seems as full of go and ductile as the Little ; compared with a Finn, the Biélo Russian will not seem impressionable.

CHAPTER III.

The Cossacks.—Their part in history.—Organization of the Cossack army.—Policy of the Government in respect to the Cossacks.—Discontent to which this has given rise among them.

ONE other type, I have said, separates itself most distinctly from all others in the Russian family. It is the Cossack. The Cossacks are not a nation ; there are Great and Little Russian Cossacks. The Cossacks of Siberia even present a strange mixture of Great Russians, Poles, Little Russians, Tartars. The Cossacks are a half military, half civil class. They are all bound to undergo military service, and to supply infantry and cavalry regiments. But, during the time they are not occupied in this service, they give themselves up to agriculture, industry, commerce.

The total population, male and female, of the Cossacks is now 2,267,676, spread over ten regions or armies.¹ Some of these armies are self-formed ; others have been organised by Government.

“Cossack” is a Tartar word, strictly meaning “knight, brave.”

¹ “Almanach de Hoppe,” 1885.

Three hundred years ago, in the thick of the struggle between the Russian nationalities and the nomadic Tartar tribes, the Government had Cossacks on duty upon the frontiers of the country. But the movement of colonization gave rise,—besides the regular Cossacks compelled to military service,—to a much greater number of Cossacks, independent, irregular, bandits (*vorovskie*).

The Russian population fleeing from the oppression of the voievodes of the tsar and the Polish nobles, or merely seeking after a free life, and at times from the desire to go in for brigandage, marched boldly into the heart of the countries occupied by the Tartars. In these men Russia found a natural defence. These advanced guards of the nation bore the first shock of the nomad tribes, and made the Tartars pay dearly for them. Such were in the Polish Ukraine the Zaporoztsi, and in Great Russia the Cossacks of the Don, the Terek, the Iaik (or Oural), and the Volga.

The temerity of these colonists is really astounding. The Cossacks of the Don, for example, occupied the forests and marshes of their peaceful Don, at the time when the whole of this region belonged to the khans of the Crimea and to the sultans of Turkey, who were making Europe tremble just as the Muscovite tsar was. Often the khan of the Crimea and the sultan made representations to the tsar as to the insolence of the Cossacks, and demanded their removal. The Muscovite Government answered that these Cossacks were thieves, that they occupied the country bordering on the Don without any authorization, and that the khan and the sultan

might exterminate them when they liked. The khan and the sultan took them at their word, and used every effort to exterminate the Cossacks. This was more than once the cause of actual wars. Thus the celebrated siege of Azov is a memorable date in the history of the Don. Azov—a Turkish fortress that shut the Cossacks out from the sea, the vessels on which they were pillaging—was taken by the Cossacks with an audacious sudden dash. The Turkish Government, resolved on punishing this daring horde, sent two armies of more than 100,000 men to re-take Azov and exterminate the Cossacks. Twice did their efforts meet with a check. This heroic struggle carries us back to the time of the epic deeds of the Knights of Malta.

Hardened by privations, the Cossacks formed an invincible race that seemed as if made of steel. Even at the present time, the Cossacks of the Don strike with wonder the observer by their lofty stature and strength, although their old men think that now-a-days men have grown weak.

The Cossacks of the Terek and of the Iaik¹ advanced yet further into the depths of Asia. One handful of mountaineers, surrounded on all sides by enemies, reached step by step the foot of the Caucasus. Others of them, fearlessly defying the nomads to battle, so arranged their colonies as to cut in two, right across their breadth, the lands of these tribes, and thus placed between themselves

¹ This was then the name of the river now known as the Oural by order of Catherine II., who wanted to destroy every memory of that revolt of Pougatchev which began among the Cossacks of the Iaik.

and Russia numberless hordes of Kirghis. These are those same Cossack bands, commanded by the celebrated ataman, Iermak Timofieévitch, that crossed the chain of the Oural and conquered Siberia.

I said above that often, in dangerous times, the Russian Government left the Cossacks to the mercy of their foes. Yet they rendered immense services to Russia. The lands that lay behind their frontiers were, little by little, peopled by peaceful cultivators. Thus enormous territories became the property of Russia. The Cossacks—the fact is notable—never lost cognisance of the ties uniting them to Russia. Separated from her by thousands of miles, owing everything to their own energy alone, they yet looked upon themselves as a part of the Russian people; and this established a strong bond between them and the Government of Russia. In the immensity of the forests (*taïgas*) and the steppes of Siberia, the Cossack bands hunted land for the tsar, and whatever region they seized, they never failed to announce the news to the Muscovite Government.

Of course the services they voluntarily rendered to the Russian Government were not the sole end and aim of the Cossacks. They were after booty, glory, and above all an independent life; but at the same time they knew well enough that they were serving the interests of Russia. Thus Iermak, when he undertook the conquest of Siberia, looked upon this as an exploit destined to atone for all his sins.

Whilst they served the Government, the Cossacks had no sympathy with it. Unlimited independence and republican liberty held sway among them. They hated the despotism of the tzars, and above

all that of their voïevodes. They tried several times to overturn the Government during the time of the troubles, and again at the revolt of Stenka Razine, and at that of Pougatchev. But as they did not wish to separate from Russia, the Cossacks were of necessity compelled to recognise the authority ruling them. In the time of Peter the Great, part of the Cossacks of the Don, refusing to put up with restrictions upon their freedom, crossed into Turkey. The sultan eagerly welcomed them, gave them lands and full liberty to govern themselves as they liked. Despite these advantages, these Cossacks (the Niekrassovtsi) could scarcely bear the thought that they were serving the enemy of their country, and the majority of them returned to Russia. They were very useful to the Emperor Nicolas I. in his victories over the Turks.

The Cossacks were by no means professional brigands. Truly, they fleeced the Crimea and Turkey, came up to Constantinople in their ships, devastated Persia, at times plundered the Russian merchants; but at the same time they worked. The rivers of the Cossacks—the Dnieper, Don, Volga, Oural—overflowed with fish; the virgin steppes yielded rich pasturage. The Cossacks gave themselves up assiduously to fishing and the breeding of flocks. As soon as their position became more secure, they began to till the fields.

In its internal organization, each Cossack army seemed like an enormous commune governing itself. Everything was decided by the "krougs" (assemblies) of villages and of the army. All the authorities were chosen by election. The land of the armies

belonged to the whole of the community ; the carrying out of certain industries was effected in common ; for the Oural fisheries, for example, the whole army joined and worked together on a regular plan. The stanitsi (villages) of the Cossacks extended everywhere. Thus they not only increased the territory of Russia ; they cultivated the conquered regions, and gave them a social organization.

As the power of the Cossacks grew, the Russian Government set to work to find methods for making use of them. It was wise, in the event of diplomatic complications, not to own them as subjects ; on the other hand, the Government often furnished them with arms and ammunition. Gradually it began to supply them regularly with pay, to own the Cossacks as its subjects officially, to give them rewards ; at the same time it began to mix itself up with their internal affairs. By degrees it founded new armies and reformed the old. Sometimes it subdued them by force, but force carefully exercised ; under Catherine I. the army of the Zaporojtsi was wholly destroyed, almost without resistance. The major part of the Zaporojsti were carried off to the banks of the river Kouban, where they formed a new army.

Now-a-days the autonomy of the Cossacks in all that concerns their central administration does not exist. Of the ataman of the army, only the name is left. That is the title borne by the heir to the throne. By this clever device, the Russian Government has adroitly put an end to all attempts at electing an ataman. As to the *nakaznois*, the Government generally chooses them from the Russian

generals.¹ If a Cossack is named for this post, he is always taken from another army ; for example, a Cossack of the Don is nominated ataman of the army of the Terek, and *vice versa*. As a rule, care is taken not to nominate the Cossacks to any post, not even in the general direction of the army ; and the Government is making systematic efforts to destroy their republican traditions and wholly assimilate them to the rest of its subjects.

To attain this end, the Government has long been trying to sow discord among the Cossacks. Thus it conferred the rank of nobility on all the Cossack officers, although among them the position of an officer can only be held by one who has been chosen for that purpose. Again, under Alexander II., the Government gave away, under the name of private properties, almost half the lands of the Cossack army ; it showed a very special generosity to the officers, but also assigned modest domains to ordinary Cossacks. But the estates of the armies were a collective property, distributed only by right of tenure among all the Cossacks. This alienation of estates to the officers has brought about the result that at the present time the Cossacks possess sometimes less than half the estates to which they have legal right. The policy of the Government has for end the creation of inequality, and therefore class animosity, among the Cossacks, in order to render protest from them as a whole impossible.

To attain the same end, the Government has tried to establish among the Cossacks the zemstvo, which

¹ The *nakaznoi* ataman is, so to say, an adjunct or representative of the *voiskovoï* ataman (ataman of the army).

would have effaced all difference between the Cossacks and the rest of the population. Until the present time the local autonomy of the Cossack stanitsi (villages) was very considerable. But last year the Government introduced certain regulations to restrict the rights and privileges of the village assembly. This measure once taken, the rights of the Cossacks became even less than those of the peasants. The Cossacks, forming as they do a sort of popular aristocracy, are proud of their autonomy, and the general discontent provoked by this measure can be easily conceived.

CHAPTER IV.

Germans and Jews.—German pretensions to have civilized Russia.—Great influence on Russian policy of the Germans of the Baltic.—German labour colonies.—The part they have played in southern Russia.—The Jews.—Their importance as part of the people.—Their despised position.—Polish and Caucasian Jews.—Rights of domicile.—Jews in the administration and in the schools.—Economic *rôle* of the Jews.—Their poverty and their plundering.—The Semitic question.—The means to its solution.

DISPERSED here and there over Russia, dominated by a population of pure Russian nationality, are also a certain number of Finnish, Tartar, and other races. Several of these I have already mentioned.¹ Here I need only say a few words on two non-Russian races that especially deserve attention. These are the Jews and the Germans.

Both inhabit various places in different parts of Russia. Each of them occupies a social position apart from the rest of the people, but apart from them in two quite different ways.

The position of the Germans until now is, so to say, privileged. Even to-day the answer of the celebrated General Miloradovitch, on the subject

¹ See Book I., pp. 11, 12, *et seq.*

of the Germans, is worth repeating. The Emperor Alexander I. asked what reward he would like for his services. The general begged him to make him a German.

The Jews, on the contrary, are as pariahs, not even enjoying the poor privileges that belong to all other Russian subjects.

The Germans owe their privileged position to the influence of the nobility of the Baltic provinces in the main. Looking upon themselves as the *Kultur-tragern* (educators) of this barbarous country, they rely one on the other, and are constantly finding better positions, more remunerative work, than the Russians.

Count Kankrine, one of the most eminent ministers of the Emperor Nicolas, said, "It was by a special dispensation of Providence that Russia, until then a mere mechanical aggregation of very discordant elements, was able to acquire the German provinces of the Baltic Sea. By that acquisition it became possible for her to form, by degrees, a political organism. These provinces have served her for a model; it is from them that all the organic institutions of Russia have come, her governments, the constitution of her nobility, municipal organization, etc."

This quotation depicts admirably the presumption of the Germans, as well as their ignorance and their contempt of Russia. Russia was plunged in chaos and darkness. God said, "Let there be Germans"; and there was light. Unfortunately the count is right as far as concerns the German institutions, a not very enviable model. The institutions

of the Baltic provinces, created by the cruel rule of a minority, are truly a fine model! And it is for this reason that the Russian remembrance of German rule, now in its decline, is not much tintured with regret. . The Germans brought us much science and industrial *technique*; in politics they were the chief organizers of the despotism, and often enough they have so acted as to deserve the curses of our nation. We look upon the German rule as we do that of the Tartars.

Were there not in Russia other Germans than the Government employés, the organizers of our bureaucracy, and the managers or directors who have tried to organize the seignorial domains on the Baltic model, they would be simply hated. The 600,000 Germans living in Russia do not all belong to these sorry categories. Besides a certain number of educated men, who have known how to really understand their new country, have learned to love it, and have done much for our science, and even for the national spirit in Russia, we have also German colonists occupying whole districts in southern Russia. These colonists have enjoyed a very privileged position; they received from the Government excellent land in large quantities, and communal autonomy ; they were free from taxes and military service.¹ Thanks to all these favours, and to the money help they received from their co-religionists in Germany (they are Memnonite sectaries), thanks also to their love of work, these

¹ The latter privilege was only abolished when military service was compulsory for all. As a consequence of this measure, many colonists passed from Russia to America.

colonists attained a condition of comfort exceedingly rare, and their method of agriculture had great influence on the economic development of southern Russia. They gave an impulse to the breeding of merino sheep; they cultivated the best kinds of wheat, and so forth. Unfortunately, as they occupy uninterrupted tracts of land, as vast as a German principality, they are still at the present time isolated from the Russians, and in many cases do not know their language. The rich colonists have besides acquired in certain places estates so huge that the Russian peasants think themselves wronged, and this provokes at times hostile demonstrations on the part of the Russian population, such as occurred during the anti-Semitic troubles. On the other hand, recent facts point to the commencement of more friendly relations between the Russians and the Germans. One of the best proofs of this is the Stunda, a sect very general in the south, created by the propaganda of these German colonists.

In any case, although the Germans are not loved in Russia, there is, nevertheless, no German question; on the contrary, as the privileges of the Germans decrease, the feelings of Russians towards them become more favourable.

The position of the Jews is much more abnormal, much more dangerous, for the feelings of the Russian populations in respect to them seem growing more hostile than before.

More than one-half the Jewish nation lives in Russia; nearly two million—three million if the population of Poland is counted in. The Jews have dwelt in our land since the most remote times. Ten

centuries ago there was in the south of Russia the kingdom of Khasars, in which the Jewish religion was dominant. The oldest lives of saints mention the Jews who used to dwell in Kiev; and the chronicles about Vladimir the Holy, founder of Christianity in Russia, speak of Jew missionaries, who tried to induce the Grand Duke to embrace their religion. But the most considerable portion only emigrated into Russia at the time of the persecution of the Jews in western Europe. This emigration occurred when all the west of Russia belonged to Poland. The kings of Poland maintained the same policy to the Jews as the mediæval sovereigns of Europe. They looked upon them as means of profit, and, declaring with perfect frankness that the *rôle* of the Jews was to accumulate money, gave them every opportunity of exploiting the people. Educated Russian Hebrews, who deplore the sad part played by their co-religionists in Russia, ascribe to this legislation most of the money habits ingrained in the Jewish people. However this may be, for centuries the Jews have incurred the curses of the Ukraine population. In their revolts against Poland, the Little Russians massacred the Jews without quarter. They hung side by side a Pole, a Jew, and a dog, and wrote over them: "Pole, Jew, and dog are all one."

When Poland was conquered, the emperors of Russia, where from the most remote times Jews had not been permitted to live, did not allow them to enter Russia. They were only allowed to dwell in the ancient domains of Poland, and in the territory, at that time a desert, bordering on the Black Sea.

Further, they might live in the Caucasus, where they had right of domicile before the annexation. These restrictions as to right of domicile exist in full force to-day, although this general rule has its exceptions. These exceptions have in turn others, and in fact the question of the right of domicile depends mainly on administrative despotism. Hence it is often decided by bribes, caprice, chance. Thousands of Jews live for years in Moscow. Then, one fine morning, they are hunted out ; the police expel them, and scatter them in all directions. The legislation of Alexander III. again has lessened the rights of the Jews. Only a certain number of the race can, to this hour, enter into the service of the state ; the same rule applies to schools. This number is calculated on the number of the Jews living in Russia.

Legislation prevents the Jews from blending with the Russian population. Besides, the Jews have been forced by their very history to form a compact mass more imbued with religious and national fanaticism in Russia than anywhere else. The old hostility of the Hebrews to all that is not of them is still in full force among our Russian Jews. They have a language of their own, a kind of ancient German dialect, and speak Russian very badly when they speak it at all. To most of them Russia is a goï,¹ *i.e.*, a strange being, to which the rules of morality obligatory towards God's chosen people are not applicable. The Russians in their turn have a traditional and even unconscious contempt of the Jews. These unhappy relations one to the other

¹ A Jewish expression.

change greatly and vanish completely between educated Russians and Jews. Unfortunately the intelligent people are too few on either side for their example to appreciably influence the masses, amongst whom mutual relations are growing worse from economic causes.

The economic rôle of the Jew is especially that of middleman between producer and consumer. He is trader, commission agent, broker.

In the government of Tchernigov, 22 per cent. of the Jews keep taverns, 40 per cent. have no definite calling, *i.e.*, do anything that comes in their way by which money can be made. In the government of Kherson, of the total number of spirit merchants, 96 per cent. are Jews, of tavern keepers, 77 per cent., and of corn merchants, 78 per cent.¹ But none of these callings, tavern keeper, corn merchant, and the like, can lead to fortune without cheating and cruel exploitation of the peasants.

Moreover, the Jews have much to do with the letting of land to the peasants. The holding and letting of land by the Jews is very considerable in Russia. Thus, in the government of Ekaterinoslav they hold 61,000 déciatines; in that of Tauride, 109,000; in that of Kherson, 219,000. They let out in the government of Ekaterinoslav 58,000 déciatines; in that of Kherson, 271,000, etc. In certain places, as in the government of Poltava, *e.g.*, recently, the Jews have begun buying the land in smaller and smaller lots, and this gives rise to a hope that a certain tendency towards the direct cultivation of the soil is growing amongst them. But

¹ *Free Speech*, No. 45.

in general the Jews only hold land in order to farm it out to the peasants, a new means of exploiting these, and of making themselves odious in their eyes.

This exploitation takes on a character so much the more acute as the Jewish population, crowded together in sixteen governments of Russia by the authorities, do not find there sufficient resources for all their wants. Most of the Jews are indigent. In the governments of Kiev, of Volynia, and of Podolia, 2½ per cent. are on the official records of mendicity. The others who do not beg, rob the peasants rapaciously. By all sorts of evil devices they try to get a miserable morsel of bread, and they are forced to steal, however unwillingly, or else food would fail them. It is estimated that the average revenue of a Jew of the Ukraine is not more than forty-eight roubles a year.¹

Thus the Jewish question in Russia is one of the most involved, one of those most difficult of solution. The united efforts of Russians and Jews alone can alter this miserable state of affairs, that has drawn in its train the frightful anti-Semitic troubles. On the Government is laid the duty of taking measures for making the rights of the Jews equal with those of the Russians. On behalf of the Jews, it must be before all things demanded that they cease to exist as a nation wholly isolated from, independent of, hostile to, the rest of the population. Circumstances themselves are working to some extent in this

¹ See M. Tchoubinsky: "Work of the Ethnographic and Statistical Expedition, etc.," vol. vii. p. 40. But there are many Jews who are rich; therefore the means of subsistence for the mass of the Jewish people cannot be more abundant than in the case of the Russian peasant.

direction, by bringing about the complete ruin of the majority of the Jews, and by convincing them that their kinglets—the millionaires—are not really at one with the rest of the Jews, as the latter are simple enough to believe. Moreover, this ruin may compel the Jews to devote themselves more and more to productive labour. We must not, in fact, look upon the Jews as composed solely of exploiters. In that same government of Tchernigov, *e.g.*, 13 per cent. of the Jews are engaged in agriculture; in the governments of Kiev, Volynia, Poltava, out of the total number of 750,000 Jews of both sexes, there are 160,000 artisans, drivers, water-carriers. In the towns of the south the Jews are often engaged in the most laborious toil, the shipping and unshipping of transport goods. This mass of Jew workers below, and of civilized Jews above, might get rid once for all of all divergence of interest, all hate, if they knew how to free themselves from the crowd of Jew exploiters, and if, also, they found in the Russians a moral support and some desire for reconciliation. This last is unfortunately wanting.

The anti-Semitic troubles that have raged in the south, and that are not even now wholly quieted, have produced in this connexion a result not easy to be understood at the present moment. On the one hand, they have compelled the Jews to examine their position seriously, and to seek for an issue out of it. Hence have resulted many romantic plans of emigration into Palestine or into America. Such a passing out is clearly altogether impossible for a population estimated by millions; but it is characteristic, that in these appeals a voice is always to

be heard inviting the Jews to productive labour. There, in far-off Palestine, they will no longer be exploiters, but tillers of the soil and labourers, after the manner of their fathers. The same voice is heard in the meetings of Jews that have emigrated to Paris, where there is a Jewish working men's society. In Russia, a group of some size has been formed that has for mission the re-formation of the Jewish nation. Sects of Jews are forming, such as the "Spiritual Jews," sects that are an attempt to bring the Jews and Christians nearer together, even on religious grounds. On the other hand, the hatred of the Russians, shown so fiercely in the anti-Semitic troubles, seems to have driven away from our nation the educated Jews. This estrangement is very evident of late, as well as the increase of Jewish patriotism, if such a word can be used of a people that has no country.

Without pretending here to make any forecasts as to the final solution of the Jewish question, I will, however, remark, that the most liberal period in the policy of our Government was the time of the closest approximation of the Jews (at all events the upper classes) to the Russians. So that one may hope that the suppression of the severe laws which forcibly unite the Jews into a compact mass deprived of all rights, will have a favourable influence on the solution of the Jewish question in Russia, as it has had in other parts of Europe.

When will the time for the abrogation of these pains and penalties come? Up to the present time the Government of Alexander III. only makes them more and more severe.

BOOK III.

THE SOCIAL CLASSES IN RUSSIA.

THE PEOPLE.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I. The Tartar invasions have nipped in the bud the development of the germs of a landed aristocracy and of a commercial class.—The ancient village in Russia.—The primitive *mir*.—Preponderating importance of the popular class.—Its indirect action on authority.—In its eyes serfdom was only a transitory institution.—It connects serfdom rather with the *mir*, the one asylum of liberty.

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CHAPTER I.

The Tartar invasions have nipped in the bud the development of the germs of a landed aristocracy and of a commercial class.—The ancient village in Russia.—The primitive *mir*.—Pondering importance of the popular class.—Its indirect action on authority.—In its eyes serfdom was only a transitory institution.—It connects serfdom rather with the *mir*, the one asylum of liberty.

In ancient Russia there were certain conditions favourable to the development of a landed aristocracy and an order of manufacturers and traders.

From the 13th century onwards, however, things take another turn. The Tartars on the one side, the Germans on the other, drive Russia into a kind of *cul-de-sac*, cut her off from all the rest of the world.¹ Commerce and industry fall into an

: In three hundred years, starting from 1224, Russia underwent twenty-four Tartar invasions, without counting the small chronic incursions of these barbarians. In this place we cannot dwell upon the ruinous condition of all Russian commerce, owing to the privileges granted to the Tartars: our hunters, e.g., were obliged to give up to them, on demand, even their hunting stock in trade. The excessive depreciation of money is a striking sign of the impoverishment of commerce. The Russian *grivna*, worth forty-eight drachmas in the 11th century, falls about the middle of the 12th to forty drachmas, at the end of this century to

atrophy. ✓ The painful toil of the agricultural pioneer becomes the lot of all the land, and only yields to all men means of subsistence uniformly poor. There is no means of becoming wealthy save brigandage. The upper classes, moreover, take origin and grow very slowly. Under the influence of this equality of fact the sentiment of equality grows little by little ; and at the same time the cruel struggle with nature and with hostile nations forces men to press closely together, imposes on them unity.

This then is the social and economic school in which the character of the Russian people takes shape.

Picture to yourself a little village of Russian pioneers, somewhere near Simbirsk, two centuries ago. In front of the village and beyond the Volga stretch limitless steppes, whence flocks of savage Nogaïs swoop down like hungry falcons ; all round are dense forests filled with deer and rebel Tchermisses. A pathless morass separates the village from the small fort of the tsar, in case of attack the sole refuge of the inhabitants. In winter the morass is covered with a bridge of ice ; the temperature falls to -40° ; the bourans (storms) of Siberia heap up snow-mountains capable of engulfing whole villages. Is it wise then to live separately, family by family, farm by farm ? Does not every one every day need the help of his neighbour, for defence against the Nogaïs, for felling forest trees,

twenty-four, and at the beginning of the 13th to fourteen. This terrible economic crisis is before the time of the actual Tartar conquest.—(Klioutchevsky : "The Council of the Boyards in Ancient Russia," p. 99.)

for clearing lots in order to put them under cultivation, for warding off starvation if the fields are yielding nothing—there is no place where one can *buy* bread,—for keeping in order the road leading to the tsar's fort, the one refuge in case of danger?

Man is by nature a social animal; he inclines to allying himself with his like. But this natural instinct becomes yet more marked in circumstances such as these. It is strengthened by all the strength of utilitarian calculations. Thus the mass of the people was born, lived, and died in conditions that developed in them a religious respect for the *mir*. Outside this, life seemed impossible.

The ancient Russian villages were not, as a rule, large,—two, three, four *dvors* (courts),¹—the fragments of cultivable land scattered here and there in the forests and marshes compelling the formation of small villages only. But these villages, in spite of the distances between them, lived in constant alliance and constant relations. A *mir* occupied, e.g., a circumference of 300 versts (320 kilomètres, nearly 200 miles). Here the commune, in the actual sense of that word, did not as yet exist. Virgin lands alone were a communal good. The cultivated lands belonged to families, or even to small patriarchal communes; but the sentiment of solidarity that the life in the *mir* developed prepared men's minds by degrees for the communal holding of the land.

The intellectual speculations of the peasant clearly

¹ The *dvor*, or court, is the economic unit: it contains one or several houses, and one or several married couples lodge in it. The *dvor* has only one hedge and one gate in common for its inmates.

would assume the form of an inquiry into the better organization of the *mir*. The necessities of the commune forced each man to think out the most perfect organization of the commune, inasmuch as the populace could only rely upon organizing its own forces, seeing that there was not in the village a master capable of assuming any responsibility. The master—where he did exist—served the tsar, and confined his relations with the village to the receiving as many payments in kind as he could get.

Habituating themselves in this way to self-government, the people grew up under the rule of a complete equality, and by degrees transferred the idea of equality of the rights of each to economic relations. The development of thought in this sense was inevitable. At bottom, the idea that all are equal, that social institutions only exist for the good of society, and finally that society is under obligation to assure work for each individual, is but the natural and logical consequence of the very idea of society. These simple consequences do not come merely to those minds in which the development of classes disturbs the regular march of human thought.

The Russian people, in spite of all their ignorance, grew up under circumstances in which no classes existed; moreover, they could not fail to deduce that two and two make four. Later on, when the character of the people was already formed, and the mass of the people organized in its *mir*, the latter was a great obstacle to the development of the privileged classes. The *mir* had existed even when everything else favoured that development.

The dispositions and tendencies of the masses were a stone round the neck of the development of the nobility, and made their fall more easy than might have been imagined. Now-a-days they are very injurious to the development of the *bourgeoisie*, and will very probably destroy them in their turn, like the nobility. On the other hand, they have created Russian absolutism; or, more accurately, have made possible its triumphant development into an institution of unbounded despotism, and often actually directed—and this is most curious—against the interests of the people.

The importance of the masses is therefore very great. Whether the people speak or are silent,—whether they act or squat down in their wheat-fields,—everything in the country is involuntarily based upon them. The state policy of the Government, the rise and fall of the privileged classes, the mental work of the educated classes—all this and a thousand other things bear the impress of the influence of the peasants, without these knowing it, without in many cases even those subject to it being aware of the real cause of what they do or say. The peasant acts on them as nature acts, as the environment which predetermines our actions independently of any understanding we may have or may not have as to their causes.

As consequence of this, the study of the character and institutions of the people has in Russia more of interest than anywhere else. This study explains to us at once the past and present of the country, and casts a light upon its future. Until the present time, in fact, the influence of the masses on politics

has only shown itself by way of reaction. But now the spirit of the people is growing, is becoming capable of vast political conceptions. The hour is coming when the masses will say their say more clearly. I do not wish to play prophet, but it is evident that the people will try to reproduce in Government institutions something of what they have done among themselves.

Let us look then at the people at home, in their villages; let us see what they do when they act according to their own tastes and tendencies.

I have already mentioned the tendency to equality, and the sentiment of sociability so obvious in the Russian people. These traits are especially marked in the Great Russians, but they are very evident also in the other Russian races. To a Russian, the profound respect of the English working-man for the gentleman is an almost incomprehensible sentiment. At the time of Polish independence, when the Polish Government gave some of the Cossacks titles of nobility, these new members of the privileged classes exchanged smiles, asking one another—“Brother, is my shadow something longer now?”

Even serfdom could not destroy the sentiment of democratic equality among the people. Of course this time of trial, which pressed especially upon the Great Russian peasant, could not be without influence on his character. But, despite all this, the peasant has not turned slave. Slavery existed in ancient Russia, and was replaced by serfdom.

Notwithstanding the slavery tendencies of the nobility, notwithstanding the encouragement the Government has given to those tendencies, our

serfdom has never been able to become slavery pure and simple.

The *pomiechtchik* (gentleman owning serfs) has never had the power of life and death over his dependant; by the terms of the law, a cruel master was himself subject to the jurisdiction of the administration. The serfs had rights of property, and could formerly own serfs in their turn. The law recognised that if the peasants' master could not provide them with four and a half déciatines of land each, they had the right to ask the Government to enrol them as state peasants.¹ Truly, at the same time the peasants had no right to bring any complaint or objection against their lord.

Thus our serfdom to its very end was rather a colossal abuse of the nobility and Government than a well-established social order.

This was precisely the point of view of the peasants themselves. They were always convinced that serfdom was a transitory institution. The peasants obeyed the nobles, not as "lords," but as "lords of the tzar," himself a representative of the people. The popular idea of serfdom was as follows. The tzar, needing the services of his employés (*sloujiloé soslovie*), repaid them by peasant labour. In their opinion the tzar had an equal right to make a peasant a noble, or a noble a serf, for the common weal. At the same time the people

¹ This law was never repealed; it was simply omitted in the second edition of the *Svod Zakonov* (civil code). Abuses of this kind are not infrequent in Russian legislation. They are called "changing a law in a codificative way." It would be more correct to say "in a proof-corrector's way."

obstinately went on believing that the lands of the nobility belong to those who work on them.¹ In a word, the spirit of the people was not cowed. It has never recognised the legality of the principle of slavery maintained by the tzars and by the nobility. None the less it yielded to the cruel despotism of its masters.

Herein was a source of corruption. The sentiment of liberty became yet more dulled; the feeling of human dignity yet less acute. The peasant, growing weaker under the yoke of eternal toil, had no chance of mental development. On the other hand, the very yoke of their common slavery gave the peasants new reasons for closing up their ranks, attached them to their *mir* by a closer tie. For the *mir* was the only institution in which they found they were men, in which their rights were recognised, in which they found moral and material support, and even some protection against the despotism of their masters. The history of serfdom reveals to us miracles of self-abnegation on the part of the peasants for the sake of the *mir*. "To suffer for the *mir*"—the expression became classic—was a formula of martyrdom and of heroism. Thus it came to pass that the Russian peasant emerged from serfdom with the same qualities of character as those with which he had entered into it, but with those qualities more marked.

¹ In conformity with this, the impostor Pougatchev—who pretended to be the Emperor Peter III.—declared that as soon as he had reconquered the throne of his ancestors, he would restore all the estates to the peasants, and would from that time forward recompense the nobles by appointments.

CHAPTER II.

What the *mir* is.—Russian villages: the *izba*, the *dvor*.—The *osmaka*.—Organization of labour.—Administration of the *mir*.—The Assemblies.—Woman's rights.—Administrative control.—Division of the soil.—Communal labour.—Why the sharing of land came to an end.—Its renewal.

WHAT then is the peasant *mir*?

The *mir* is a commune, whose bond is unity of autonomy and of possession of land.

Sometimes the *mir* is a single village. In this case the economic administration adapts itself exactly to the civil. Again, it may happen that a large village is divided into many rural communes. Then each commune has its special economic administration, whilst the civil and police administration is common to all. Sometimes, lastly, a number of villages only have one *mir*. Thus the size of the *mir* may vary from twenty or thirty to some thousands of *dvors*.

A Russian village is not very beautiful. One of average dimensions is generally bisected by a long street.¹ This is as wide as a Parisian boulevard, but is not paved. Furrowed in all directions by the flow from the melted snow, it is hollowed out into

¹ I am taking as a type the Great Russian village.

countless mud-puddles, and in places overgrown by grass. Here and there along the street are wooden houses, covered with thatch. In the provinces of the north, where there are many forests, these *izbas* are sometimes of great size ; they have a ground and a first floor.

In the southern provinces, the Ukrainian *khata* is made as a rule of interwoven branches, plastered over with potter's clay, and whitened with chalk. Sometimes the *khata* is of wood. The Ukrainian village is always very fair to see. The *khatas* are pretty, clean, shining with chalk, with gardens and festoons of flowers. But a Great Russian village has no colours. The beams of the *izbas* are sombre, the straw of the roof black ; no trees, no flowers. The village is dirty ; it is all smoky, and this the more in that sometimes even now are found what are called *kournaias izbas*, i.e. *izbas* without chimneys, and warmed in the most primitive fashion. The wood is kindled in a stove without a chimney, so that all warmth and smoke remain within it. When the room is thoroughly warm, the door is opened to let out the smoke. It will be easily understood that, with such a system of heating, all the walls very soon become black as a chimney.

The fronts of the *izbas* give upon the street. Behind each of them is a large court, with offices ; it is a heap of straw and wood. Often sucking-pigs and calves live in the *izbas* side by side with men. Behind the courts are kitchen-gardens and small fields of hemp. If the village is of sufficient size, there are several streets (three or four), that radiate from a central square, in which is, as a rule, a church.

The large Little Russian village is much less uniform. Like a French village, it has a labyrinth of streets and lanes. Here already the difference in the economic system shows itself. With the Great Russians the *mir* regulates even the ground that the houses stand on ; the *mir* has the right to shift about the *dvors*, and always does this on a definite plan. Among the Little Russians the *khatas* are heaped up and piled together in picturesque disorder, according to the time-honoured chances of inheritance, of purchase, or of sale.

The Great Russian village, if it is not very beautiful, is full of life. Men there are not tied together mechanically, because they happen to be living in the same place on a map. They are bound by a thousand relations, a thousand pledges, a thousand common interests. They are linked together by community of property.¹

Besides land, the communes have property of another kind : fish-lakes, communal mills, a communal herd for the improvement of oxen and horses ; finally, store-houses, intended for the distribution to the peasants of seeds for their fields or food for their families. The enjoyment of all these various things must be distributed among the members of the commune, must be distributed regularly, equally, equitably. Thus, a fair distribution to-day will not be fair five or six years hence, because in some families the number of members will have increased, in others diminished. A new distribution, there-

¹ The Great Russian peasants hold at times pieces of land as private property, besides the communal lands. But this personal property is insignificant.

fore, will be necessary to make the shares equal. For a long time this equalization can be brought about by partial sharings-up, by exchange of lots of ground between the private persons concerned, without upsetting everybody by a general re-distribution. The members of the *osmaks* especially exchange plots of land one with another.

As yet the reader does not know what an *osmak* is.

The Russian *mir* is not an elementary unit. It is made up of several primordial cells—of small circles that form in perfect freedom. The *mir* only asks that these circles (*osmaks*) are equal as to labour-power.¹ This condition fulfilled, I am free to choose my companions in accordance with my friendships or my interests. When the village has any work to do, any property to distribute, the administration or the assembly of the commune generally does not concern itself with individuals, but with the *osmak*. Suppose there are three *osmaks* in a village, and six men are to be sent to mend the roads. The mayor of the *mir* (*selski starosta*) tells the *osmaks* they have to send two men each. But these two men each *osmak* has to choose from among its members. For example, it may be that I give up the whole of my year to these compulsory labours, whilst my companions in the *osmak* repay me by their labour on my wheat-fields, or even reimburse me for my time by actual money. This all depends on our private and mutual arrangements ; the administration or the communal

¹ These small circles have different names in different provinces. I use the Muscovite name. It is, of course, understood that analogous divisions do not exist in the small communes.

assembly has nothing to do with it. In sharing out the land, the communal assembly¹ tries therefore to distribute it equally amongst the *osmaks*; then the members of each *osmak* share among them their common portion, and make out of it small lots for each family.

This organization gives an almost military order and discipline to all the *mir*'s acts; at the same time it guarantees very thoroughly the independence of each family.

Each village has an administration; it is represented by a mayor (*sel'ski starosta*), chosen by the *mir*.² But this administration has to do only with affairs determined upon in principle by the communal assembly. The *starosta* has no right of initiating any measures of importance. Such questions (partition of the land, new taxes, leases of communal property, etc.) are only adjudicated and decided by the assembly of the *mir*.

All the peasants living in the village come to the assembly, even the women. If, for example, the wife, by the death of her husband, is the head of the family, at the assembly she has the right to vote. The peasants give to women much more rights than the state law grants them. Thus it may come to pass that a woman may be the mayor

¹ *Skhod*.

² A certain number of village communes form a *volosi* (circle), at the head of whose administration is the *volostnoi starchina* (chief of the *volost*), chosen by the assembly of the *volost*. Further, there are judges of the peasants chosen in the same way. Thus, theoretically, the autonomy of the peasants is very complete; but practically this autonomy is literally crushed out under the weight of the imperial police and administration.

of the *mir*—which in the eye of the law is sheer nonsense. At times the whole village assembly consists of women only, and this assembly determines the general division of the land.¹ This happens if the fathers of families think it more remunerative to go outside their village to work, and leave the working in the fields to the younger members of their families and to labourers. Upon other points, the rights of the peasant women are not well defined. The peasant idea is, that if the woman is independent—that is, not under submission to a father or husband—she has the same rights as men. The state law, on the contrary, accords almost as few women's rights as the other European legislatures. Hence it follows that the rights of the village women are vague, indefinite. At the present time they are “rebelling,” as the peasants have it; they are revolting against the despotism of the husband. Everywhere they are beginning to make the fruits of their labour (spinning, and so forth) their own personal property. Often, again, the women demand plots of land for themselves; sometimes they get them. In some places the communal assemblies, distributing the land, take into account the girls as well as the boys.² It is not uninteresting to notice that celibacy, with a view to keeping their independence, is common among the peasant women.

Let us turn again to the assembly of the *mir*.

The peasants meet very frequently; sometimes

¹ Orlov: “Forms of Peasant Tenure of the Soil in the Government of Moscow,” p. 35.

² M. Kharizomenov, in the *Russian Gazette*, 1884, No. 119.

to decide certain business, sometimes for the controlling of the expenses of the administration, and so forth. Very often the assemblies are convened, not to decide some question, but to discuss its principle. Thus, the question of the general partition of the land is sometimes discussed for two or three years before it is definitely decided. The aim of these frequent meetings is to get a decision as unanimous as possible. The peasants do not care for deciding by a majority; they always try to find an arrangement satisfactory to every one.

The assemblies are very lively. Order is at times wanting; liberty never, unless the *natchalstvo* (state administration) intervenes. The peasant assembly is courageous, independent; even the *natchalstvo* loses for it something of its terrorist prestige. Alone, the peasant trembles before a servant of the crown; surrounded by his *mir*, he becomes obstinate. To influence the decisions of the *mir* assemblies, the administration must have recourse to measures of extreme violence. It is true the administration does not make many bones about employing these, and stops at nothing. I have myself seen a *stanovoï* (the chief of the police of the canton), in order to prevent the peasants from electing one of his enemies, arrest him just before the assembly, and keep him in prison until after the election. Still more frequently the administration has recourse to mere subterfuges. It convokes the assembly unexpectedly, and so manages that the leaders of the opposition have no notice in time. In return, the peasants systematically refuse obedience to the orders of chiefs chosen as the result of

these illegal frauds. As a rule, the *mir* is always oppressed and robbed; but it does not yield, and it contends bravely against all abuses.

Here is a scene of revision of expenses taken from life.

The assembly is making up its accounts; those of the *starosta* are to be discussed.

A dense crowd fills the huge chamber of the *selskoié pravlenié* (management of the commune). The smell of touloups (pelisses of badly-tanned sheepskin), of great tarred boots, the breath from hundreds of lungs, make the air heavy and stifling.

Close to a wall is a table at which sit the *schetchiki* (auditors), chosen by the assembly. One of them is reading out a list of expenditure. The *starosta* stands by him, following the reading attentively. Paragraph follows after paragraph, giving rise to a ceaseless flow of comments. At last a note is reached that refers to the burial of a soldier at the expense of the commune.

"The drawers of the soldier, seventy-five kopecks; his shirt, one rouble twenty-five kopecks," reads out the monotonous voice of the auditor.

"That's too much! That's too dear!" calls out some one in the crowd.

"No; it's not much," answers the *starosta*, whose accounts are being verified.

"You're a liar!" his neighbour roars. "Why, on fête days we don't wear clothes as dear as this. You're not going to dress a dead soldier like that. His drawers can't be more than thirty kopecks, and the shirt's worth seventy."

"I see you like cheap things," chimes in the auditor.

"But if that's the right price——Here, gossip," the peasant goes on, speaking to a woman in the crowd, "what's the price of a pair of drawers and a shirt?"

The reduction of the proposed figures is decided upon, and forty kopecks are accepted for the drawers, eighty-five for the shirt.

"To the priests, for the funeral service, three roubles," the auditor goes on.

"Don't pass that! don't pass that!" cries a peasant.

"Why not?" says he, surprised.

"He ought to have been buried for nothing; he was a stranger from no one knows where."

"It's no use talking nonsense," remarks one of the people. "The priests will never consent to bury any one for nothing."

"All the same," observes another, "three roubles are too much."

"When you die," says one of the enemies of the *starosta*, taking him to task, "or when you have to bury your wife, you can pay three roubles for obsequies. But with the *mir's* money—well, why not give ten roubles? All the more honour perhaps."

The *starosta* says nothing. The amount is passed, nevertheless, "because," says the auditor, "the thing is obvious."¹

Criticism is severe, opposition exacting. But the assembly does not allow itself to be dragged into personal quarrels. Above all, it is guided by a strict sense of justice.

¹ Orlov: "On the Modes of Land-tenure by the Peasants in the Government of Moscow."

The sharing of the land is without doubt the thing that most excites the passions of the peasants. Private discussions on any new subdivision generally last a very long time. When the malcontents have prepared the soil sufficiently, the matter is referred to the official assembly. Hence the debates are very lengthy, very stormy. Those in whose hands many plots of ground have accumulated of course try to prevent any new sharing-up. Sometimes the assemblies cannot come to a conclusion within two or three years, for the peasants only resolve upon such an economic perturbation in the face of an absolute necessity. This the more as the law requires the consent of two-thirds of the owners to a general re-division. But it must be noted as a characteristic point, that in spite of this law the assembly decrees a new partition even in cases where it is claimed by a much smaller number of owners. Now the assembly will yield to a very small minority, now to any minority. At the time, e.g., of the latest partitions (1882-1883) we meet with the following cases. In the village of Iaroslavka re-partition is voted for 272 *dvors*, not for 227; in the village of Makarovka it is voted by 64 families, voted against by 71; in Ouglianka, it is voted by only 46 families, opposed by 51.¹ None the less, in all these villages the partition was carried out. In these cases the majority wisely sacrifices its own interests to justice. These examples will show the reader the place held by the idea of the right of each to the land in the mind of

¹ See the Statistical Reports of the Zemstvos (Kozlov, pp. 18, 19. Voronej, p. 72). The few examples I take are not solitary cases.

the peasants. But the law, as well as the necessity of conciliating as many interests as possible, protracts the decision in favour of a new sharing-up. At last, those in favour of this get the upper hand, and the village is moved by the most unusual sentiments. The *mir* becomes grave, preoccupied, solemn. It turns to its work as if it were engaged in the celebration of divine worship.

The land has to be divided with absolute fairness into equal parts. To attain this end, all the fields are grouped, according to their quality, into three *iarousses*.¹ In the first is placed the land of the best quality; in the second, that of average quality; in the third, the worst. Then each *iarousse* is divided according to the number of *osmaks*, so that each *osmak* receives a share of land of each of the three qualities;² then the members of the *osmak* share among them, with the same accuracy, the land received by the *osmak*. If it is impossible to equalize the quality of the land, the *mir* tries to compensate quality by quantity. Further, it is compulsory that the *mir* recompenses the owner for improvements made by him on the land that is taken away from him. In many places the *mir*, not to discourage good owners, makes manuring compulsory and fines those who neglect their plot.³ The partition is made by persons specially chosen for this work, and is subject to the control of the *mir*. The peasants

¹ Muscovite name; it varies in different provinces.

² To avoid the possibility of unfairness, the plots are drawn by lot.

³ I touch but lightly on this question; but a whole volume might be written on the means invented by the peasants to bring about an equitable division and to protect each one's interest.

never run the risk of trusting this business to a land-surveyor. They divide up their lands themselves very cleverly. In a small village, the whole affair only lasts a few hours.

The work of the *mir* is done as rapidly as regularly.

For example, here is a picture of mowing-time in the commune of Ostrov (government of Moscow). This commune is composed of ten villages, in all 2,684 men, who own in common the meadows on the banks of the Moskova. On the eve of the mowing six measurers, one for each village, come to the fields and divide them into *kholsts* (divisions analogous to the *iarousses*) according to the quality of the grass. Each *kholst* is divided into sections (*deliankas*) according to the number of *osmaks*. At the same time, each *osmak* in the villages chooses in private meeting ten mowers. At 2 a.m. these small gangs of ten come together from all sides upon the scene of action; those that are late pay a fine. As the fields have been already measured out beforehand, and the station of each gang determined the night before, in half an hour the whole crowd has settled down to work. The *osmaks* come, one after the other, out of the ranks, take their appointed place, and thus all the mass of mowers spreads over the immense area of the fields. By 3 o'clock all are working their scythes as one man. The ten mowers of each *osmak* work together, and each gang takes care not to be behind the others. By 8 a.m. everything is done. The mowers, scythe on shoulder, go off home singing, feed, and go to rest. Gangs of women and young people coming from the *osmaks*, take their place in the fields and gather together

the hay. After these come the peasants from the villages with their carts. About 2 o'clock the ground is covered with little ricks, that are divided by lot among the members of the *osmak*, and the carts carry off the hay to the villages.¹ By 8 o'clock at night there is not a handful of hay in the fields.²

As a rule, the communes work their land in the following way.³

Pasture-lands are generally held in common, and indivisible.

Forests, if of little importance, are also held in common. If they are worth anything, they are often forbidden to be touched for ten or twenty years, and then are shared out like the mowing. Or else the felling of the trees is done in common by the whole of the village, and the felled wood is shared among the members of the *mir*. But, after all, the peasants own scarcely any forests. These are, for the most part, in the hands of the *pomiechtchiks* (lords).

It very rarely happens that the re-partition of the fields occurs each year. The peasants know too well how necessary it is to allow each cultivator time to profit by all the improvements he makes. Thus,

¹ The inhabitants of each village dry the hay at home.

² The reader must not, however, think that the Russian peasants only busy themselves with the sharing of their fields. This is a fable spread abroad by the opponents of communal holding of the soil, by those lords who have had the ingenious notion of circulating, at the same time, quite contradictory reports. They said that the peasants themselves were beginning to grow tired of communal tenure, and were giving up the sharing of the land among them. In point of fact these two statements are equally untrue.

³ I describe the general plan, without pausing on certain variations and exceptions.

e.g., in the government of Moscow, the average time between the sharings-up is more than thirteen years;¹ in the government of Riazan, ten to fifteen years,² and in that of Tambov, ten to twelve years.³ It must be added, however, that since 1861 (*i.e.*, since the emancipation of the serfs) the partitions have for a long time ceased in a great part of Russia. This fact was hailed with joy by the opponents of the *mir*. The course of events, however, soon got rid of their illusion.

The peasants, among whom, to say truth, inequality in the division of the land had reached a high pitch, did not make any compensating re-partitions because they were waiting for the *revisia* (the census). The distribution of taxes depends on the *revisia*; and the peasants thought it only fair to make the re-division of their land to some extent dependent on the distribution of the taxes. Besides, among the peasants there is a conviction that the unjust re-partition of the land made in 1861⁴ will, at the time of the first *revisia*, be corrected to the average of the general sharing of land over the whole empire. But it is these very hopes, and the fear of the troubles to which they would give rise, that force the Government to put off the census from year to year.⁵

¹ Statistical Report of the Zemstvo of Moscow, vol. iv., book i. (a conclusion based on observation of 9,427 cases of new partition).

² Statistics of the Zemstvo of the government of Riazan.

³ Statistics of the Zemstvo of the government of Tambov.

⁴ At the time of the abolition of serfdom (1861) the peasant serfs of the *pomiechchiks* received 22,000,000 déciatines; 82,000,000 remain in the hands of their lords. (Military Statistical Report, p. 203.)

⁵ The last census was in 1858.

The patience of the people has at last become exhausted, and in 1879 they began in many places a series of sharings-up which have gone on steadily increasing up to this present year.¹ The tendency to allot the land equally is growing even in the villages where, until recently, private property ruled; it is emigrating from Great Russia to the heart of the Ukraine. Thus the *mir* is proving its vitality once again, and at the very moment when its foes were making ready to see it decently buried.

¹ See Appendix E.

CHAPTER III.

The clan.—Early agriculture and markets.—Individual property.
—The *volost*.—Who were the landowners?—The family commune.—The fractional commune.—Origin of the *mir*.—
The *tchetvertniks*.—Illustrations.—The commune of the *mir*.
—Mobility of the population.—Development of self-government.—Illustrations.—Influence of foreign elements.—The average of the commune family and of the individual family.
—Influence of the Government.—Demands of the peasants.
—Summary.

MOST OF my readers are doubtless somewhat astonished to find the agrarian commune so largely in vogue in Russia. The student not unnaturally expects to hear of its decay, in conformity with so many like cases in history, in conformity with so many theoretical considerations. As my work is essentially descriptive, it is impossible to enter upon theoretical discussions. But it will not be out of place to note here certain facts that will throw light upon the development of the Russian commune.

Many points in its history are not yet cleared up. Thinkers of equal ability, even at the present time, take upon this subject most different positions. But these differences and difficulties need not concern us much, if we deal only with facts, without anxiety to reconcile them with any particular theory.

Generally the clan (the *gens*) is regarded as the

starting-point in the development of the agrarian commune. In the history of Russia certain traces of clan life are noticeable. Nevertheless, the existence of the commune of the clan, in more or less distinct form, is by no means positively proved as far as concerns *historic* Russia, even for epochs the most remote.¹ Sokolovsky, the most notable representative of the clan theory in Russia, is himself compelled to admit that it is necessary on his theory to have recourse to analogies in the history of other peoples; "for it cannot be believed that the Russian people does not, as regards its mode of holding and working the land, come under the general law."²

Without challenging the accuracy of this statement in general, let me nevertheless contend that historical analogy cannot always make up for deficiency of facts; and the facts do not show us that the commune of the clan did exist in ancient Russia. What is the explanation of this? In all probability the explanation is, that history begins at a time when the clan *régime* had already passed away. The clan *régime*, founded at the epoch of hunting and fishing, is always in a very difficult position when agricultural life begins. Now in Russia we find agricultural labour at the most distant time; even as early as A.D. 946 our records make direct

¹ The word "rodovoï," so often used by our historical writers, has two meanings; it signifies the life of the clan, and also the patriarchal life. But the tribal forms described under the name "rodovoï" always refer to the patriarchal life.

² Sokolovsky: "Economic Life of the Agricultural Population of Russia," pp. 82-123.

references to a considerably developed agriculture amongst the most savage Slav-Russian tribes—*drevlianie*. The documents of the eleventh, and even of the tenth, century show that almost all the plants were then under cultivation that are now: oats, wheat, millet, barley, rye, peas, lentils, flax. Moreover, on a smaller scale, there was cultivation of garden plants—especially cabbage and turnips—which to-day are the chief vegetables at the table of our peasants.¹ Even gardens and orchards were planted. From this it is clear that the Slav-Russians had evolved as far as the stage of agriculture long before the tenth century. This state of affairs would react powerfully upon the clan, and so much the more as from the nature of the implements of labour at that time agriculture had already taken on the character of small farming.

Moreover, at the time which immediately precedes the advent of historic Russia, the Russian territory was the busiest of markets for Arabs, Greeks, Normans, and so forth. This gave rise to a powerful commercial class; even the advent of the State in Russia, and the political union of the Slav tribes, followed upon the creation of this class.²

In any case, individual property certainly existed in Russia at this epoch. “Russian Truth”—“Kousskaia Pravda”—the oldest of legislative documents, a mere summary of the rights-by-custom of that time, speaks of the division of estates amongst brothers. At the same time we see already in existence considerable inequality of wealth. In

¹ Aristov: “Ancient Russian Industry,” pp. 48–68.

² See Klioutchevsky: “The Boyards’ Council.”

the year 1080, at Novgorod, a percentage tax was levied to meet the expenses of a war. The boyards paid 135 times as much as the ordinary citizens.¹ The difference of the wealth possessed by the two classes must have been, to say the least, in the same ratio.

All such facts as these are quite out of harmony with the equality and primitive collectivism of a clan.

The agrarian regulations and the manner of holding land are not quite clear. Some Russian scholars hold with Sokolovsky that the volost was merely a remnant of the commune of the clan, and suppose that the volost had certain agrarian rights over the states held by its members. But this assertion is by no means supported by evidence. On the contrary, we find that the "Russian Truth" mentions very heavy fines as levied upon those who remove the landmarks between the fields belonging to particular citizens. Further, we find that the princes, the boyards, the monasteries, and even the traders, had their own land, tilled by slaves, by paid labourers, or by farmers to whom they were let—*polovniks*. In "Russian Truth" are paragraphs that settle the relations between the landowners and the polovniks, settle also the wages of the agricultural labourers. It is incontestably proved that a number of peasants held the position of polovniks on the estates of the large landowners. But the law did not prevent peasants from holding land themselves. There was even a class of peasants, called *svoizezemtsi*, holding their own land, and writers like

¹ Bieliaiev : "Russian Peasants," p. 40.

Bieliaiev, Aristov, and others, agree that in ancient Russia private property in land existed for the peasants as well as the agrarian commune. This last, it must be remembered, only existed by hypothesis. There is no positive proof of its existence.

After all this, how are we to solve the question whether individual property in land did or did not exist at that time? All are agreed that those who owned land could will it away, let it, and even sell it.¹ Were the rich people who let their estates to farmers actual owners? Some, *e.g.* Sokolovsky, say that the land was not a property but a possession. This may be true. But at this epoch the juridical sense of the people was not fine enough to distinguish between the idea of possession and that of property.² In this sense landed property did not exist, either as individual or collective property. But this is a matter of no importance.

Suppose we admit that the boyards were not landed proprietors; who, then, was the owner of their land? The nation? The prince? The volost? Supposing that this point is settled, in what way did the owners exercise their rights?

Such exercise of rights did not exist. No one knows anything about them. No one has brought forward any proof of them, as far as the first centuries of Russian history are concerned. Tribes as

¹ Again and again the phrase occurs, "I sell the land for ever, without the right of re-purchase." For the traditions of the clan found their echo in the right of the family to buy back the land that had been sold.

² See Sergueevitch: "Studies in Russian Law," p. 514.

yet so little removed from a primitive collectivism, so little prepared to understand the right of individual possession, would easily understand the supreme right of the nation, and of the nation's representative, the prince. But where was the Russian nation during these centuries? It did not exist; it was at most only just coming into existence.

The powers and duties of princes also were too vague, too accidental, for them to give a prince a distinctive character as representative of the country. As to the volost, no documents earlier than the fifteenth century say anything about its rights to interfere with the landed property of the dwellers upon its territory. Rights of this sort only appear later. So that, even admitting that the volost has inherited from the pre-historic clan some idea of its own supreme right over the territories occupied by its inhabitants, it is evident that the idea was very vague, and led to no practical result. It did not prevent some persons from occupying large estates, whilst others had not a square foot of land. To sum up: all these individuals were not landed proprietors in the strict sense of the phrase, but they possessed the land as far as land was possessable at that time; their rights in respect to it were as great as those of a commune or of a prince. This was landed property as far as landed property could exist at that time.

If this qualification is once made, the author of a recent study of Russian ownership of land was accurate in saying: "Individual landed property appears among the Russians very early; its origin is antecedent to that of the veritable commune.

This last attains its full development in the 17th and 18th centuries, whilst the existence of individual ownership is established by direct evidence as existing since the 12th century.”¹

All this does not mean that at that time collective ownership did not exist in Russia. It did exist, but under another form. This form was that which was called the family commune, analogue of the Servian Zadrouga, and still to be met with occasionally in Russia.

“At the beginning of actual history,” says Madame Efimenko, “in the north of Russia, the domination of the Zadrouga is evident in the organization of the family, as well as in that of landed proprietorship.”²

What is this family commune? What is the difference between it and the clan? In the first place, it is a patriarchal and not a matriarchal institution. This marks off the two types clearly one from another. Further, the clan is an institution covering socially a much wider area. The clan is a society; under all its special forms it has, blended with its indefinite yet harmonious *ensemble*, all those rights which, after they have been dissected and defined, appear in our modern society as political, personal, family rights. The family commune is not a society; it is the primary cell, out of which the organization of society is built.

The family commune comprised many members—from thirty to sixty. They were related one to

¹ Blumenfeld, pp. 97, 98.

² Madame Efimenko: “Studies of the Life of the People,” p. 365.

another, either by blood or by affiliation. They lived together, worked together, and ate together. The family was under the direction of a patriarch, generally the oldest member, but sometimes elected. Possibly the election was a modern innovation, unknown in the old communes.

In fine, this family was not very different from one of the present day. But there were points of difference of some importance, amongst which one must be noticed. The property of the family did not belong to the patriarch; it was collective, and belonged equally to all members of the family.

"I affirm," says Madame Efimenko, "that there is in the north of Russia only one unit of agrarian organization, the *petchichtché*—the individual property of a patriarchal family (*rodovoï*)."¹ The fields, meadows, hunting-paths, fisheries, forests, even the wild bees—everything that was started and worked by the collective labour of the family commune—were its property. The small villages, like solitary islands, were scattered over the immense oceans of forests and marshes that were owned by nobody, that any one who would took as his by the *jus primo occupandi*, and that their possessor made the most of, according to his own liking and his own capacity. As to the volosts, these were administrative bodies, and had no economic or territorial importance.

This, then, is the economic organization that has been clearly shown by Madame Efimenko to have obtained in the north of Russia, and which probably existed in other districts after the close of the epoch of the clan, *i.e.*, at the dawn of Russian history.

In point of fact, what *else* could have arisen at such a time?* As soon as agricultural labour had made its appearance, as soon as the Russian territory was traversed by two great commercial routes—from the Caucasus to the Upper Volga, from the Baltic to the Black Sea—the clan was doomed. A new unit arose in human labour—the family. Land that could be tilled, only occurred in small areas, surrounded by forests and marshes. Those who tilled it found themselves isolated, cut off from the rest of the clan; they no longer needed it, they were independent of it. The implements of labour, all of the most primitive description, no longer required any considerable economic organization. The clan lost all *raison d'être*. On the other hand, each little group of workers in its isolated fields needed in its internal organization a strong power, independent of, free from the control of, the clan. Hence the latter broke up into small family units, admirably adapted to the new conditions of labour.

At this time of difficulty for the clan, there rose among the Slav tribes a State. This struck the death-blow of the clan, so much the more completely as it was not a mere confederation of the clans; it was the creation of a quite new and revolutionary force, of the commercial and industrial class. This State grew up, not upon the territory of the clans, but along the great commercial highways traversing Russia. In conformity with this fact, the State had a Pan-Russian character, and evolved in part from elements common to Greece, to Sweden, to the peoples of a thousand nationalities, whilst it was in

alliance with a cosmopolitan Christianity. This new factor in history assailed the clan from above at the **same time** as the family decomposed it from below.

Of course the **clan**, **even as** it dies out, always leaves its mark upon the succeeding social order. At the same time the mark is not very deep, for the period of the dying-out of the clan is one of a yet more radical change, one that has modified methods of living far more deeply than any historical revolution. Out of this vast change Russia, we must believe, came into being. The period antecedent to it only yields us indeterminable, undistinguishable, uncertain fragments.

With an apology to my readers for having supplied out of my own imagination certain facts that appeared to be wanting, I return to the family commune. If we suppose that the change referred to above had begun in exceedingly remote times, then the existence of the family commune gives us at once the explanation of the many traces of individual property in our ancient documents. For the normal evolution of the family commune removes all difficulty as to the advent of individual property.

The family commune exists as long as the material conditions permit of its carrying out collective labour, *i.e.*, as long as it does not grow too large. As the population of the commune increases, small colonies are formed from it. Every one of these new colonies leads an almost isolated economic life, as the mere distances between them render collective labour almost an impossibility. Then the decomposition of the commune sets in : the families, of which it consists, no longer stand in need one of the

other, and the land that cannot be divided up very often becomes a source of discontent and quarrels. In order to reduce their agrarian relations to order, the families decide upon separation, and then the division of the land takes place.

Very naturally this division only results in certain cases in a new series of family communes that last until the next dividing up occurs. But as a rule, when once the partition of land does begin, it raises many difficulties in the way of a return to the ancient condition of things.

At this period of history man is only to a very slight extent the master of nature. It is nature rather than labour that creates the product. But the natural qualities of the soil are not the same in different tracts of land. How, then, is the land to be divided? The difficulty is the greater as the distribution ought to be absolutely equal, seeing that it is a collective property that is to be shared. Until the sharing takes place, the land belongs to all alike; therefore the plots of it now to be held by each should be perfectly equal.

The only way out of this difficulty is not to divide up the land into concrete lots, each given to a particular owner once for all, but to divide it into imaginary, abstract, ideal lots. By this device the holding of each person is an ideal fraction of the property of the mother commune. To arrive at this ideal fraction, the land is parcelled out according to its quality, and then each family receives a part of each kind of land. But even with this arrangement absolute equality is not secured; there are many pieces of land, exceptionally good or excep-

tionally bad, not easy of division, or even, as result of such division, losing all their special qualities. Land of this kind is held successively, turn and turn about, by the members. The consequence of this method of division is, that if the quality or quantity of the land changes,¹ the land must again be divided up to secure the equality that is desired.

Here then is the new type of commune that arises in consequence of the partition of a family commune. It is known in Russia as the irrational commune; its members have divided up their common inheritance, and yet they are in connection one with another. This state of things is a distinct obstacle in the way of a return to the family commune, pure and simple, as the latter necessitates a considerable degree of personal independence.

By this I do not mean that the interdependence of the members of the fractional commune is very marked. On the contrary, in principle they are the owners of their particular fractions; they inherit them, sell them, dispose of them as they will.² It is true that landed property, as the lots are ideal, flits about, so to speak, over all the territory, without taking firm root in any particular place. But supposing that the equal divisions and the changings of lots become more and more rare, and are at last finally abolished, we have individual property pure and simple. This process did take place, and is

¹ A meadow is washed away by a river; a marsh becomes dry land fit for tilling, etc.

² All this soon gives rise to great inequality in quantity amongst the holdings, and then the equalizing their quality becomes of little moment, and even useless or absurd.

taking place now on a large scale. Madame Efimenko has given evidence of it as far as concerns the north, and the same thing can be seen occurring in other parts of Russia.

But the fractional commune may take on also another form of evolution, that at all events in Russia is much less frequent than the one just described. Collective holding, which seems at an end when the family commune passes into the fractional, reappears in a more marked and more complete form in the commune of the *mir*. Historical documents seem to fix the 15th and 16th centuries as the date of the commencement of this method of evolution.

That the reader may understand this evolution, still very obscure if we depend only on the insignificant details of antiquity left us by Time, the destroyer, I remind him that an analogous process is going on even at the present time amongst the peasants, known as *tchetvertniks* or *odnodvorzi*.

It is a process of deep sociological interest.

The Russian *tchetvertniks* of to-day, known legally as state peasants, are descendants of the warriors that were placed by the Muscovite tzars as colonists along the frontier lines. They held their land on condition that they defended the frontier; and they held them as a personal possession,¹ recognised later on as their individual property. Some time after, the law made certain attempts to turn all these lands into one collective holding; but

¹ This is only true of the ancestors of the *tchetvertniks*; there were other soldier-colonists also, who held their land collectively.

the peasants looked upon, and do still look upon, themselves as individual, personal owners.

A village of tchetvertniks, at the present time, is generally inhabited by the descendants of one or of two of these soldier-colonists; thus all the village have the same family name. The peasants in it can trace out their genealogy quite accurately, and in many cases have preserved the charters of the tzars that granted these estates to their ancestors. They nickname themselves "gentlemen of the wooden shoe," and it is beyond doubt that they are allied by blood to the noble families of the same provinces. For a long time they retained the right of owning serfs, and they were at no time serfs themselves.

The terms of land-tenure amongst them are very curious. They belong to the fractional family period. The peasants hold the land as private, personal owners; but the lot of each of them represents an ideal fraction of the whole of the territory that formerly belonged to the common ancestor. This is the manner in which each man's lot is determined: the whole of the territory belonging to the village is divided, according to the number of the ancestors (the technical word that is actually used), into the portions that these ancestors once on a time held; next, each of these portions is divided into equal parts, according to the number of the families descended from each ancestor; finally, each family lot is divided by the number of members.

Let us imagine a village with twenty heads of households and two hundred hectares of land. Let us suppose this village to trace back its origin to

two ancestors, each possessing primarily the same amount of land. One of them has had one son, the other three. Next, suppose that from one of these sons five new families are descended, from another three families, from the third four, from the fourth eight. Then the land will be divided as follows :—

Five heads of families have 20 hectares each.

Three	"	"	$11\frac{1}{9}$	"	"
Four	"	"	$8\frac{1}{3}$	"	"
Eight	"	"	$4\frac{1}{6}$	"	"

In this very unequal re-division the peasants go over again, in retrospect as it were, the historical process according to which the land was divided up and parcelled out. In reality this inequality is yet more marked than in our example; for each possessor can alienate his lot in whole or in part, and from that moment it is lost to his descendants.¹ There is still another method from which a landless peasantry may result. Every new comer, even if he is admitted as a citizen of the village, is without land unless he buys it. On the other hand, any one that buys a lot of land becomes, *ipso facto*, a citizen, and is reckoned as a member of the family to whom the lot he has bought belonged, although the purchaser has no blood relationship to this family.

This is the method of distribution of fields; that of meadows and forest varies. The most typical

¹ Any one can alienate at his own will the whole lot; but to alienate a part of it he must have the consent of the village. If a portion is given as a dowry, it belongs to the wife, and not to the husband. After the death of the wife, her children only, even if they should be illegitimate, can inherit her land.

method is the distribution in proportion to the amount of arable land each man possesses.

It must be noted that if the amount of land belonging to a village increases or diminishes, a new distribution is made, in order to increase or diminish all the lots in the same proportion. If, for example, two or three peasants lose their holdings on account of a railway taking them, the land of the whole of the village is redistributed.

A village of tchetvertniks presents, I repeat, an excellent example of the fractional commune, and thus gives the explanation of many things in its history. When we are discussing past ages, it is easy to imagine that what we wish did occur. But in this case there is no room for suppositions; we know positively that the Russian village originates from the breaking up, not of a clan, but of a patriarchal family. Very often we know even such details as the first name and surname of the patriarch, the number of his sons, the nature of the charters granted him. If ever there were a case where sociological analogy is permissible, it is the one now under consideration.

I said above that the evolution of the fractional commune leads to two diametrically opposed results: (1) in some cases individual property pure and simple; (2) in others the commune of the *mir*.

I do not need to multiply examples of the first of these two processes. Every one looks upon this method as normal—as much more normal, actually, than it really is. As to the second method, I shall certainly be asked—Are there facts sufficiently well-established to show that a fractional commune, in-

stead of breaking up, may pass over into a higher condition of collective holding?

The villages of the tchetvertniks furnish us with many examples of this; examples that we can see with our own eyes. Some of these I now quote.

The district of Kozlov, in the government of Tambov, was formerly occupied by a large number of tchetvertniks; most of these are now living under the commune of the *mir*. All the peasants, e.g., of the volost Jadilova, were once on a time tchetvertniks; now there are only a few isolated cultivators of the soil. All the rest have by degrees adopted the *régime* of the *mir*, "by mutual arrangement between the peasants of the *mir* and the tchetvertniks."¹ It is probable, says the document just quoted, that the metamorphosis was not effected without considerable dissensions amongst the peasants, for they called the time of its occurrence "the epoch of mutiny." The same method of evolution is proved, by the same document, in respect to many other villages—Samovirtz, Ouspenskoïé, Pokrovskoïé, Starogaritovo, Douskaïa, etc. In the village of Lejaika formerly all the people were tchetvertniks; now two-thirds of the population constitute a commune of the *mir*. Vestiges of the tchetvertnik *régime* are to be found in many villages where now-a-days there is not more than one tchetvertnik. "Popular memory has preserved the fact that the cause of the transition from the *régime* of the tchetvertniks to that of the *mir*, at a time more or less remote, was the inconvenience arising from

¹ "Statistical Report of the District of Kozlov," pp. 43 *et seq.*

the inheritance of land, owing to which the lots became too finely subdivided."¹

The same phenomenon is to be seen in the government of Riazan; the village of Perekhdul, e.g. "passed from the *régime* of the tchetvertniks at about the period of the ninth census (1851), after protracted dissensions and contests."² The same thing has happened in the village of Teploïé. At the present moment a movement in the direction of the *mir* is to be noticed in a number of tchetvertnik villages in the same government.

In Ranovsky Verkhi, for example, furious discussions took place on the subject of the equal division of land. In the village of Krougloïé "a bitter struggle took place in respect to the tchetvertnik lands; a large majority of the peasants demanding the equal partition of those lands." In the village of Jaroslavki there have been already many contests on this point. Everywhere it is the dispossessed majority who demand the transition to the *mir*; the minority, in possession of plenty of land, oppose it. The same condition of things has been proved as far as concerns the villages Storjivaïa, Dolgoïa, Tagodnoïé, Molinka, Samodourovka.³

A whole series of similar facts has been proved as touching the district of Rannenbourg (government of Riazan). Long since, the *mir* has obtained in the villages Satine Khoutor, Boukhovoïé, Zomo-voïé, Piškovy Riassy, and Krivopolianié. In Kroutoié and Poutiatino it came to pass about 1830; in

¹ "Statistical Report of the District of Kozlov," p. 46.

² "Statistical Report of the District of Dankov," p. 251.

³ *Ibid.*, 251 *et seq.*

Delihovoïé and Topki in 1840; in Znamenskoïé and in Staroklionskoïé in 1852; in Poupki and Prigorodnoïa in 1859; in Melenki, Lapstok, Doubovoïé in 1861; in Bibino and Golojokhovo in 1863; in Grigorovo in 1869.¹ In these places also the change was only brought about "after much internal struggle." Frequently it took place gradually. Very often the rich men in their discontent separate themselves from the rest of the community, retain their own land, and make villages of their own.

A similar struggle is going on at the present time in many villages. Sometimes (*e.g.* in Toussovo, Klimovo) this has already had as result the declaration that some of the land is held collectively, that some of it remains tchetvertnik. In other villages (Griaznovki, Astapovo, Demkino, Meliknovo, Kocyhelskaïa) the movement, although of considerable strength, has led to nothing, because, on the appeal of those antagonistic to it to the law courts, the partition of the land was forbidden.

In the government of Koursk, in which the tchetvertniks in some places constitute one half the population, "the peasants are beginning with greater and greater frequency to give vent to the idea that the land is the property of the commune"; that "the communal assembly has the right of making equal the lots of the inhabitants"; and that "the bonds of kinship ought not to serve as foundation for the re-partition of the land."² This idea has already in some cases inclined the peasants towards

¹ "Statistical Report of the District of Rannenbourg."

² "Statistical Report of the District of Koursk."

the *mir*. Thus, in the district of Graïvoron, all the tchetvertnik villages of the volost Dorogochtchanskaïa had in 1884 passed over to the *mir régime*. The same thing occurred between 1881 and 1883 with all the villages of the volost Viazovka. Much agitation in the same direction has taken place also in the volost Lissitchanskaïa.¹ The movement would assume much larger proportions but for the opposition of the Government. Thus, in the large village of Gridino, in the district of Soudja, the tchetvertniks, after having divided up their land, were, on the complaints of certain discontented rich men, summoned before the law courts.²

In the district of Koursk the movement appears to be less marked. But even here the advent of the *mir* has taken place in Bolchnia Zvegintzova, Troubetzkoïé, Znamenskoïé. As to the attempts at bringing about these reforms, they have been very many in this district. In the village of Kondratieva "the arable land was about to be divided up, but the landed proprietors prevented this from being done, and scarcely stopped at murder to attain their ends."³

In the village of Tchijevka the communal assembly has twice asked for permission to institute the *mir*, and twice has been refused. In the village Vyssokoïé the assembly put a stop to the inauguration of the *mir* commune, but when a commencement was made with the partition of land, the rich men opposed this with all their force, and one

¹ See the *Russian Gazette*, 1884, No. 271.

² *Russian Gazette*, 1884, No. 201.

³ "Statistical Report of the District of Koursk."

peasant was killed. The village of Vanini instituted the *mir*, and the new order of things lasted four years; but then "the rich men reversed that order," this costing them more than two thousand roubles. In all the tchetvertnik villages, according to the same document,¹ the institution of the *mir* is the question of the day with the peasants. All the people are divided into two parties: the one in favour of the *mir*, the other of the existing order of things. "Numbers are on the side of the former, but power on that of the latter; that power—of money and of corruption—will possibly triumph for some time yet; but the ultimate change to the commune of the *mir* is beyond all doubt."²

The history of the Russian peasants has received but little attention. Yet we know that in the governments of Riazan, Orel, Tambov, Voronej, and others, whole districts formerly occupied by the tchetvertniks are now under the commune of the *mir*. The work of many inquirers would be necessary before the process of this transformation has been worked out in each individual case; but the general fact is thoroughly established. The transformation of villages from the condition of lots to that of the commune of the *mir* is a process constantly going on, observable under sovereign after sovereign, whose inclinations were of the most varying nature towards the communal *régime*; Catherine II., Alexander I., Nicolas I., Alexander II., Alexander III.

The same process doubtless obtained in the more remote periods of Russian history; and if we finally

¹ Page 60.

² *Ibid.*

notice in the 16th, or even in the 15th, century the appearance of the commune of the *mir*, this need not astonish us, even if we are in ignorance of the causes of the transformation.

In point of fact, the question as to these causes is not easy of solution ; the greatest difficulty about it is, that the economic and material necessity of this evolution is not evident. I may go further : as the method of production of the time in question was of the small-farming type, the decomposition of the family commune, and the advent of individual property, would seem to be as logical as the advent of a higher form of collective possession would seem, economically speaking, illogical. Thus we find ourselves compelled to explain the advent of the *mir* by other reasons, not of an economic nature, which are, taken as a whole, sufficiently powerful to override that economic factor which tended to the dissolution of the commune.¹ Unfortunately, in social science it is the economic element only that has been worked out in a really scientific manner. When this is not at our service, we are in the dark. Thus I am forced to throw myself upon the mercy of the reader if my explanations do not seem to be sufficiently clear or sufficiently thorough.

What is the chief difference between the commune

¹ It is in this sense that Blumenfeld speaks of the struggle going on at this time between the right of labour and the spirit of solidarity. He continues : "When the victory remains with the latter, the commune has a tendency to establish a higher degree of equality among its individual members. . . . When the principle of labour wins the day, the intervals between the dividings up become longer, and finally the divisions cease and individual property appears" (page 26).

of lots and the commune of the *mir*? In the commune of the *mir*, the conception of a right to the communal property is transferred from the members of the patriarchal family to the citizens of the commune. Every one who is entered as a citizen acquires, *ipso facto*, this right. Hence the rights of the citizens are absolutely equal; as a consequence, their lots of land are equal, and the amount of land of each dvor only varies in proportion to the number of the inhabitants of the dvor.¹ Finally, each citizen has only the usufruct of the communal property; he has no power to alienate.

Taken as a whole, all this means that the commune, in passing over to the *mir*, assumes a civil character, and gets rid, once for all, of the principle of the family. The democratic element of equality preponderates in it. Finally, the rights of the commune as an institution overrule all individual rights; for, speaking accurately, a commune of the *mir* has expropriated the land which formerly belonged by right of inheritance to the individual members of the village.

This is the true significance of the change which took place.

Are there historical circumstances that could have influenced the masses of the people in the same sense? Yes; in this precise sense the people have been influenced by many circumstances in their history.

In the first place must be noted the extreme

¹ Of the male sex. Sometimes the land is distributed on the basis of the actual working force of the dvors.

mobility of the population. This leads everywhere to a considerable influx of strangers. The new comers, admitted to the patriarchal family, either by affiliation or the purchase of a lot, gradually got rid of the genealogical idea by rendering it purely fictitious. The same influx of immigrants, as well as the natural results following from alienable and heritable property, produced a large class of peasants without lands, or with insufficient land. This discontented and dispossessed element was always ready to revolt against the privileges of the minority who held a sufficiency of land. The tchetvertniks of the present day show us the part played by this element when it has a voice in the self-government of a village. Only the law courts and the police, always on the side of legal right, prevent—if indeed they do this—the discontented from effecting a revolution in the forms of land-tenure. If these guards of lawful rights are not very powerful, and at the same time the village assembly is strong enough to deal with questions concerning the internal economy of the village, this revolution is easily effected.

At the same time as the commune of the *mir* is beginning to make its appearance, a remarkable development in the self-government of the villages is also to be noted. Throughout Russia, in the ancient times, the power of the landed aristocracy was very great. Very likely the social order would have evolved the same federative and aristocratic state that crushed the Polish peasants, but for two things. In the first place, the immense tracts of land that for centuries were the hiding-places of all

fugitives from tyranny gave the people time to organize and to work out social institutions of more or less magnitude.¹ That is precisely what did occur; at the same time, the war of independence gathered all the strength of the country around the tzars of Moscow, who, in their own interests, exterminated the aristocracy. All through their contest with the aristocracy, the tzars were fully alive to the necessity of the self-government of the peasants. Ivan the Terrible, *e.g.* granted the communes the right to inflict the death penalty; they could, and they did, substitute for the tsar's administration their elected representatives.

I shall discuss presently the effect of Government influence upon the development of the commune. At present, self-government is our concern. As the authority of the village assembly increased, the assemblies began to take part in the agrarian affairs of their members, with a view to directing and system-

¹ Sokolovsky looks upon this exceptional facility for flight as unfavourable to the political development of Russia, since this easy and simple means of getting out of the way accustomed the people not to trouble themselves about the political reforms of the country. But the White Russian peasants stayed at home and ran away no-whither. Did they profit much by this? On the other hand, the Ukraine was saved by its fugitives from zaporojjie. To my thinking, this emigration, lasting through long years, was the foundation of our democracy. Before political reforms could take place, a people was needed, instead of a savage mob of scattered families. The formation of such a people is no easy matter. It needs time, and more or less favourable conditions, such as liberty, a certain economic independence, and so forth. Now, the ancestors of the Russians, by concealing themselves in the unknown desert, secured to themselves these very conditions, and it is needless to say lost nothing by it.

atizing them. Intervention of this kind was made easy by the existence of a large number of discontented men, dispossessed and landless, and by the fact that the idea of landed property was very vague and confused. Thus the commune made use of its administrative powers to acquire agrarian ones. "When the amount of land became insufficient," says Blumenfeld,¹ "the interests of the different families came into collision, and in these collisions the volost played the part of mediator, acting on its principles of equality and solidarity. This conciliation of interests was not effected without much struggle. The volost's right of intervention only grew by very slow degrees, because it had to reckon with the principle, already recognised, of the rights of the labourer.² First, the commune laid hold of the pasture land; then it divided up the fields; next it arranged for the distribution of holdings by lot; lastly, the commune tried to introduce sharing up of the arable land."

In all this Blumenfeld paints for us a picture very different from the one we are used to seeing. I do not mean to say that this sketch is accurate in every detail, but it contains one fact clear and beyond dispute. It is usually held that collective holding arises in the clan time, and lasts as long as land is plentiful; then, when the amount of land diminishes, and it becomes dear, collective holding gives way to individual. Now we see that in Russia this is not always the case; on the contrary, we see every-

¹ Pp. 24, 25.

² I think that the labour of the epoch now under discussion gave rise to the idea of individual ownership.

where that the agrarian commune begins at the very time when a dearth of land is noticed. This the reader has already observed in connection with the tchetvertniks.

Here is one more example from the present day. The Chouia volost,¹ in the Vologda government, is a large commune of 12,000 people in 147 villages. All the fields of the volost are held collectively; they are divided up amongst the inhabitants, not only of each village, but, when necessary, of different villages. As to the meadows, these are held individually and by inheritance. The meadows are in 10,000 small parcels, scattered here and there over all the territory of the volost. They are due to the individual labour of peasants, who burn and clear the virgin forest. As, however, the population increases, says our author, it begins to expropriate these lands. A large amount of communal land was, fifty to sixty years ago, property held by individuals and by right of inheritance.

How was this change effected? Kazantzev gives us a quite recent example. Eight villages were desirous of increasing the amount of their crops. This they were unable to do, since the villages were separated one from another by other populous villages that were unable to give up any portion of their land to them. Thereupon the communal assembly decreed the expropriation of all these individual holdings, and distributed them generally. After that, the assembly forbade from that time forward the clearing of the virgin forest for indi-

¹ L. Kazantzev: "A Northern Commune," *Juridical Messenger*, 1883, Nos. 6 and 7.

vidual holdings. In other villages of the volost, adds the author, where private property still exists it is in conflict with communal property ; "but the latter has the better of it."

The appearance of the agrarian commune as a consequence of want of land is a fact of sufficient importance to warrant the giving one or two more instances. But before doing this, I ought to remark that the mode of development of the commune just mentioned is not the only one. That is the historic method ; but when the idea of the commune has once come into existence, that institution develops with much more ease in countries just colonized. The idea already in vogue as to land and collective property, and the example of communes already in existence, bring it to pass that the colonists experiencing a want, very relative, of land, introduce equal sharings up, and found the agrarian commune.

The colonization of the government of Ekaterinoslave affords us very recent examples of this. It is a very young country, and ten years ago half of it was a desert. It has been colonized by the most diverse people—Germans, Greeks, Armenians, Servians, and others. The mass of the population are, however, Russian, since the majority are Little Russians, amongst whom the commune exists to a very slight extent. In many cases the immigrants were only fugitives, and thus became serfs or vagabonds, without belongings of any sort.

For the purpose of describing the development of the commune in this country, I will make use of a recent exploration of the districts of Slaviano-serbsk and Morioupol, in the government of Ekate-

rinoslave.¹ At the beginning of the 19th century the agrarian commune did not exist amongst the Ukrainian population. Every one held his land by the *jus primo occupandi*. Every man tilled the ground wherever he found a place that suited him. From 1820 onwards the commune began to be established here and there. The peasants, asked the reason of this change, always give the same answer. Here are some examples. In the village of Joltoïe : "The number of the population increased, and unpleasantnesses and annoyances arose in connection with the holding of land. The rich had too much, the others had not enough." Thereupon it was decided to institute an equal partition of the land.

In the village of Krymskoïé : "As the population increased, land troubles broke out; quarrels, a sense of wrong were prevalent; let us share up the land, said the people, that all may own alike."

In the village of Tcherkasskoïé, formerly "one man might occupy a great deal of land, whilst another would be without a morsel of bread. To put an end to this unfairness the land was divided up."

In the village of Blagodatnoïé : "The inhabitants came here in 1842 from the district of Gadiatch (the Ukraine), where they had been individual owners. In their new country they held their lands for ten years by the *jus primo occupandi*. Then the agrarian commune was founded, and at last a means for the re-establishment of order was discovered," say the peasants.

This transformation was not effected all at once.

¹ V. Prougavine : "The Progress of the Agrarian Commune," *Messenger of Europe*, 1886, No. 5.

Before it came about, the village made many attempts to protect the interests of its weaker members (who had in the village assemblies equal voices with the others) by compromises of one sort or another. Thus, in the village of Sartany a commencement was made by forbidding the rich men to hire more than two labourers in the first two weeks of harvest, so that the poor might have time to get in a sufficient quantity of hay. Further, the rich were under interdiction during the two first weeks of harvest ; they were not allowed to get in their harvest until the poor had finished their own work. Measures of this kind went on for fifteen years. Finally, in 1860, all these difficulties were settled by the institution of the commune. In the village of Nikoeskoïé, during a similar transition time, there were limits to the number of labourers who could be hired ; *e.g.*, no one could hire more than one labourer to each pair of oxen he owned.

It should be noted that at the time of the coming of the commune, those lands were first declared communal that were nearest the village. Thus in Krymskoïé, in 1828, the lands within two leagues of the village were submitted to equal partition. Those farther off remained in possession by the *jus primo occupandi*. In 1858 the whole of the territory was equally divided up.

In conformity with this manner of communal development, the *oussadby*¹ are up to the present

¹ Lands that have to do with crops indirectly, such as the farm-yard and the kitchen gardens. In the country of which I am speaking, the farms established by the peasants at a distance from the villages are looked upon as *oussadby*.

time held individually. The commune, here only in its infancy, is not sufficiently strong to take possession of these lands, which are those most saturated, as it were, with the labour and the capital of their owners. Yet of late years rigorous measures for the limitation of owners' rights have been introduced. Thus, at Mangouch, in 1880, a very heavy tax on the oussadby was instituted—12 roubles per hectare per year. At Nikoeskoïé the same step was taken (4 to 10 roubles per hectare, according to the quality of the land). These taxes, which are higher than the rent at which the land can be let, must clearly compel the owners, sooner or later, to give up "of their own accord" their lands. At Ourzouf, in 1886, it was decreed that each farm should have 1,000 square *sagenes*¹ of oussadby land. Those who had more than this lost a proportional amount of their land; those who had less than 900 *sagenes* of oussadby received a proportional augmentation of arable land. Here, speaking accurately, the equalization of holdings is already realized.

Great is the influence of example in this transformation. Sometimes, as at Sartany, the commune was decreed directly in imitation of what had been done in neighbouring villages. A great stimulus to the movement was given by the Great Russian villages, which from the earliest days of colonization have instituted the commune, "according to Russian methods," as they say. So great is the force of example, that even the Polish colonists, who in their own country have long forgotten what the commune

¹ Between one-third and one-half a hectare.

is, go in for it here. Curiously enough, these neophytes of collectivism sometimes show themselves more skilful than the Russians when it is a question of clearing the way for the victory of the commune.

Let me wander somewhat from my subject in order to tell an anecdote. It may be stated in advance that in many villages of the government of Ekaterinoslave, some few years back, a partial return to individual property was obtained; many peasants opposing any new partition of the land. The cause of this was as follows. In all these villages the land was to be distributed amongst those entered on the last census, that of 1858. Now, as the population had greatly increased since 1858, if a dividing up took place, the new lots would be much smaller in size than the old ones. As a consequence, all the peasants whose names were entered on the census opposed a re-partition, and in the village assemblies their opposition overcame every effort of those in favour of redistribution.

Out of this deadlock the Poles were the first to find an issue. They proposed that a partial division should be decreed on the following basis. All those enrolled in the census of 1858 to receive lots of the same size as they had before; the rest of the land to be distributed in equal shares amongst the rest of the population. On the death of any one whose name appeared in the census, his land should be added to that which was to be shared equally. Thus by degrees the whole of the land would come under the new *régime* of equal holdings. This compromise proved satisfactory to the older men, who formed the majority of the opposition. The Russian

peasants followed the example, and this transition arrangement has been adopted in many villages whose inmates could not come to terms on the question of re-partition.¹

To return to the history of the commune. To sum up the evidence quoted above: *the inflow of foreign elements* into family communes, and *the development of the self-government of the peasants*, may be looked upon as the chief causes of the transformation of a family commune into the commune of the *mir*.

But if I may be allowed an hypothesis, I should suggest as another cause of this change the struggle of the individual against the ancient family. The family commune crushes out individuality; on the other hand, the commune of the *mir* gives the individual much more liberty. The question I am proposing has been scarcely touched upon at all; it is impossible to speak of it with any degree of certainty. There are, however, many facts that indirectly show us in the commune of the *mir* a result of the struggle of the individual against the family commune.

As a general rule, it appears that now-a-days the family commune has been preserved where the commune of the *mir* does not exist: in White Russia, amongst the Ukrainian Cossacks, the tchetvertniks. Further, it seems that under the agrarian commune the great family is rare. "It is amongst the tchetvertniks that we most frequently find huge families. In a single house three or four generations will be living together, and the grandfathers are treated as

¹ Kharisomenov: *Zemstvo Review*.

mere boys by the white-haired patriarch of them all," say the statisticians.¹

The same phenomenon is often evidenced by figures. Thus, in the district of Rannenbourg the average tchetvertnik family consists of seven members; the average family of the peasant of the commune 6·7. In the district of Dankov the tchetvertnik family 6·8, the commune family 6·4; district of Lgov the numbers are 6·5 and 6·4; of Soudja, 6·7 and 6; of Dmitriev, 7·2 and 6·6. In the district of Morchansk, where the commune is in vogue, 6·8 is the average of the family, but one village—an exception to the general rule—that holds land as individual property, has an average family of 8·8. In the district of Loubny (Ukraine), where the peasants are individual holders, the average family is 5·7; but in certain exceptional villages, where the commune holds sway, the average falls to 5·3.²

Facts, moreover, of the following nature are to be noted. In the government of Poltava (Ukraine), a hundred years ago, when the commune still was in existence, there the average family in different places consisted of 4·7 to 5 members. At the present time, when the commune no longer exists, the average family has increased to 5·2–5·7 members. Let me repeat that this subject has not been thoroughly worked out, and it is very difficult to say anything positively as to the nature of the influence of the commune on the family. I could

¹ "Statistical Report for the District of Rylsk, 1884," preface, p. v.

² All these figures are taken from the statistical report of the zemstvo.

myself point out cases diametrically opposed to those just given; yet the general tendency seems to me so clear that I sum it up. Face to face with the communal tenure of the land, the family grows smaller.

Of course this is not equivalent to saying that under the commune the actual population increases less than elsewhere; on the contrary, in all the countries referred to, the communal lands are less populous than those owned individually.¹ But the sharings up of great families become more easy under the communes. One peasant who was antagonistic to the partition of the land, explains his position on this wise: "When I am the master of my own land, my sons have, willy-nilly, to subject themselves to my authority."²

This phrase sums up the historical fact. Actually, under the *régime* of individual property, the authority of the father or head of the family is strengthened by all the force of the economic domination. The son who wants to leave his father against the will of the latter, is forced to become a proletarian. Under the communal *régime*, the son who desires to set up an independent establishment, is, at all

¹ On one square verst :

	Communal.	Tchetvertnik.
Rannenbourg	61 . . .	40
Dankov	65 . . .	43
Dmitriev	52 . . .	36
Soudja	69 . . .	54
Lgov	65 . . .	58

² Kharisomenov: *Zemstvo Review* for 1883, Nos. 47, 48: "Materials for the History of the Forms of Land-tenure in the South of Russia."

events, certain of not having to remain upon the same plot of land as his father. If, therefore, we are willing to admit that the co-relation of the family and the commune is as I believe it to be, we have then another historical reason for the victory of the latter social power; it increases and multiplies like all institutions that give individuals relatively more independence and liberty.

However this may be, the facts that I have just quoted will, I think, prove to the reader that the advent and growth of the agrarian commune are due to a series of intrinsic causes, and not, as the school of Tchitcherine holds, to extrinsic influences. This school, which, be it remembered, has the honour of having pointed out the fact that the actual commune is not a very ancient institution—this school explains this fact as due to governmental measures (the influence of serfdom, of capitation, and so forth). Now, it is clearly proved that the advent of the commune precedes the institution of serfdom as well as that of capitation. Finally, we meet with the commune in places where there was neither serfdom nor capitation—as amongst the Cossacks.

Further, as this school has for a long time lost all credit in Russia, I need not speak of it at length, despite the support that Madame Efimenko has involuntarily given to it. Leroy-Beaulieu, although closely allied to the school of Tchitcherine, cannot abstain from showing how exaggerated its theories are. "A singular thing," says he; "these statutes of 1861 [for the abolition of serfdom] seem to have been applied instantly to certain new villages, at

the same time as a mode of tenure of the soil became more firmly established in places where it had long been in vogue—a mode of tenure that three centuries earlier seems to have been strengthened by the establishment of serfdom.”¹

A singular thing, in truth! Serfdom was established, the commune becomes more powerful. Serfdom is abolished, the commune becomes more powerful again. How can one admit theories that lead to results thus contradictory? Is it not simpler to say that there is no causal connection between the commune and serfdom?

In point of fact, the influence of Government measures on the commune varied very much. The autocracy by its struggle with the aristocracy gave a great stimulus to the development of the commune. This stimulus was the stronger owing to the principle that all the land belonged to the tzars alone. What is the origin of this principle in respect to the Muscovite tzars? According to some, it is the old idea of the supreme rights of the clan, transferred to the tzars; according to others, it grew up under the influence of the Tartars after the conquest of Russia.

Whatever was its origin, it represented a kind of nationalization of the soil in a very rough and imperfect form. But the autocracy did not remain faithful to the principle it had once on a time used as a powerful weapon against the aristocracy. For example, the tzars founded the class of pomiestchiks, to whom were given lands inhabited by the peasants. The rights, always increasing, of the

¹ “The Empire of the Tzars,” bk. i. p. 471

pomiestchiks were in direct contradiction of the self-government that the peasants had long before even the establishment of serfdom.

"The rapid increase in the agrarian rights of the volosts," says Blumenfeld, "was hindered by the grant of lands to the votchina and the pomiestié.¹ This system of donations broke up the volost, upset all its institutions, and checked its development at the outset." This is speaking a little too strongly, but the general fact is true.

Yet greater is the contradiction between the rights of lords and those of serfs. The policy of the tzars, therefore, was by no means universally favourable to the self-government of the peasants. Further, the tzars gradually forgot their principle as to agrarian property. The Government gave to the pomiestchiks all the rights of landed proprietors, and ultimately tried to transform them into lords. The majority of the peasants became serfs. All the self-government of the country was given over to the lords. That, after all this, the self-government of the peasants was not absolutely destroyed was only due to the fact that the so-called nobles were but a service class. They contented themselves with robbing the peasants, without making serious attack on the social ideas of the people.

The policy of the tzars may be thus summed up. After having abolished landed property, they instantly re-establish it; after having supported the self-government of the communes, they subject

¹ Votchina, hereditary property; pomiestié, property held individually as reward for service.

the communes to the despotism of a resuscitated nobility.

But besides the serf, there were always in Russia State peasants. Any village of State peasants could at any moment be given over in serfdom to a noble. But the tzars had not time enough to enslave all the people; hence there were always State peasants.¹ The Government has never abandoned its original position in respect to them.² It retains the right of property in their lands; the State peasants are only tenants. Sometimes even the administration orders equal partition of land amongst the State peasants, or commands them to certain collective labour.

This position of the Government has had much effect on the development of the commune among the State peasants. But, let me repeat, these measures did not create the commune. The Government ordered partition of the land for the first time about the end of the eighteenth century, 1785, *i.e.* when the commune was fully developed. The Government in its action was only following the current of the life of the people.

Madame Efimenko, whose remarkable investigations I am so frequently quoting, declares that Government ordinances did create the commune in

¹ Up to the time of Alexander III., who in the year 1886 inaugurated the transformation of the State peasants into proprietors.

² Owing to the more rapid increase of population, as well as to the transformation of numbers of tchetvertniks, Cossacks, and others into State peasants, the latter in 1861 were more numerous than the serfs.

the north and in the south at the close of the eighteenth century, for Madame Efimenko fully recognises the fact that the commune was in existence at this time in Central Russia. She even compares these ordinances to the decrees of the French Convention. I venture to think that a fixed idea blinds, in this case, her investigations, usually so accurate. It is easy enough to find in her own writings sufficient facts to destroy her theory. Thus she herself teaches us that when the Government ordered a partition of lands in the north, "the peasants went further." They took as communal property not only part of the land, as the Government had decreed, but all of it; instead of equalizing the quantity of the land, as the Government had decreed, they began to equalize its quality also.

To Madame Efimenko, moreover, we owe the publication of a very interesting document—a scheme of the director of the State peasants. This official, when he was urging on the Government the necessity of dividing up the land, noticed, amongst reasons for this, the need "of appeasing the peasants who had not enough land."¹

As a matter of fact, the history of our peasants, little as it has been investigated, shows that they themselves demanded the partition and equalization of lands before any Government ordinances were

¹ Scheme of the Director of Economics of Arkhangelsk, 1786 : "Equalization of lands . . . should be regarded as absolutely necessary, as much for giving the peasants means to pay their taxes, as for appeasing the peasants who have not enough land."—A. EFIMENKO, 1. 33¹.

issued. Petitions in this sense were inserted in the mandates of the peasant deputies, members of the commission summoned by Catherine II. in 1767.¹ Thus in a peasant mandate from the district of Totma, the Government is besought to take the land away from merchants and officials, to restore it to the peasants, and "to distribute it in the communal fashion, according to the number of the population." The peasants of the district of Orlov petitioned that the land should be not only taken away from the merchants, but from the peasants themselves, so that it might be distributed according to the number of the population.

The peasants also asked that the land might be taken from their rich fellow-villagers and distributed amongst the poor. The petition of the peasants of the district of Khlynov were of the same nature. The peasants of the volost Molskaia complained of the dearth of land, urging that if the Government decreed an equal distribution, there would be enough for every one.²

"The decrees of the Convention" were not therefore altogether unexpected by the peasants of the north. As to the south, I have quoted enough facts to show that intrinsic causes and intrinsic struggle led to the appearance of the commune there. I need not, I think, further discuss this unscientific theory.

The general conclusions to which we are led are, then, as follows. The actual type of the commune

¹ The Government admitted to this commission deputies from the State peasants, but not from the serfs.

² Semevsky : "The State Peasants under Catherine II.," chap. i.

arose in the 15th and 16th centuries from the fractional commune, which had in its turn grown out of the family commune. This last probably appeared at the time of the destruction of the clan, owing to the advent of agriculture and of commerce. Thus, throughout this evolution, the collectivist principle steadily advances, and becomes more and more a part and parcel of the State policy and of popular life.

This is, of course, the general and abstract formula. In every concrete case the process of the development of the commune is more involved than this. The commune arises in some places earlier, in others later; it develops in this place to a greater, in that to a less, extent; sometimes it vanishes altogether. But on the whole, the area of land held in common always increases, and the commune has a steadily increasing number of proselytes.

This progressive development of the commune went on even after 1861, in spite of the legislation of Alexander II., that was expressly intended to destroy it.

By law, the village has the right to abolish the commune by a majority of two-thirds of the votes; and any one member even may compel the *mir* to make over to him, as individual property, the plot of land to which he has a right.¹ But cases of this kind are, however, not very numerous. In one-half of the government of Moscow, e.g., out of a total of 74,480 dvors, in eighteen years only nineteen dvors were definitely separated from the commune.² Very

¹ Statutes for the buying in of land, § 165.

² Orlov: "On the Forms of Peasant-holding of the Soil in the government of Moscow."

often separation from the commune is a pure fiction, a means, *e.g.*, of getting out of the communal solidarity in the matter of taxes (*krougovatia porouka*). The *mir* decreed the abolition of the commune, but, in point of fact, continues to live under its *régime*.¹ All who have studied the question with any ability bear witness to the desire of the peasants to maintain the *régime* of the communal tenure.² And facts furnish abundant proof of it; the reader has been able to assure himself of this already. A number of documents,³ and among them the official *Compte Rendu* of the Land Bank of the peasants,⁴ prove that by buying land with the help of subsidies from this bank (a recent creation), the peasant associations sometimes turn themselves into communes among the Great as among the Little Russians.

We have seen how the commune spread among the tchetvertniks.

Further, by law the whole village even has not the right to compel the tchetvertnik to give up his plot of ground. His possessions are his by right of individual property. He knows this very well, and

¹ A great number of cases of this kind occur. See *e.g.*, report of the Commission charged, under Imperial order, with an inquiry into the present situation of agriculture, etc. Supplement to vol. i.

² See M. Laloche (government of Olonetz), M. Sokolovsky; and also many reports of zemstvos.

³ *E.g.*, the province of Rilsk (the *New Times*, Feb. 1, 1885); the province of Pietrovsk (*Russian Gazette*, 1884, No. 176); the province of Poltava (Little Russian), *Russian Gazette*, 1884, No. 201, etc.

⁴ *The Messenger of Europe*, April, 1885: "Agrarian Question," by M. Slonimsky.

often has recourse to the protection of authority. Not infrequently in such a case the cases are dismissed by the tribunals. These measures are of but little help. And, moreover, in certain places the *régime* of individual property is kept up for the old land, whilst all newly purchased land comes under the communal *régime*. In certain villages this is a general rule.

After the abolition of serfdom the communal *régime* penetrated into White Russia (government of Moghilev), and reappeared¹ in the Ukraine (governments of Kiev and Poltava), where it had been almost destroyed. It has even of late crossed the frontiers of the Russian nationality, and is taking root among the Moldavians of Bessarabia, just as formerly it became acclimatized among the German colonists in Russia.²

To sum up. According to the approximate calculation of M. Fortunatov, the area under the communal *régime* in different parts of Russia is : region of the Lower Volga, 98·4 per cent. of all the peasant land ; of Moscow, 97 per cent. ; the Oural, 95·4 ; southern Great Russia, 89·1 ; Little Russian governments on the left bank of the Dnieper, 58·5 ; White Russia, 55·5 ; Polish Ukraine, 15·1 ; Lithuania, 7.³

¹ For many details proving the existence quite recently of the commune in a part of Little Russia, see M. Loutchitzky's admirable book.

² Klaus : "Our Colonies."

³ *Russian Gazette*, 1885, No. 320.

CHAPTER IV.

The *mir* contrasted with the political system of the country.—

Naïveté of popular ideas.—Confusion of effects due to physical phenomena with those due to political.—Illustrations from travellers' observations and popular tradition.—Belief in sorcerers.—The legend of emancipation.—Contempt for human dignity.—The great family of old.

WHEN one studies the harmonious organization of the *mir*, considers the aptness of the mass of the people for autonomy in administration and in labour, sees finally the principle of equality everywhere entering more deeply into the life of the peasants than into that of the most advanced nations of Europe, one is induced to expect in the political order of Russia something akin to that of England or Switzerland. At least, one thinks, the Russian peasant ought to live at ease, ought to be assured against economic exploitation and the caprice of others invading the sphere of his civil rights.

The slightest acquaintance, however, with Russia in general, and with the life of the Russian village in particular, dispels all illusion on this head.

I shall have occasion to speak in this book of the unbridled despotism that weighs so heavily on political life, of the absolute want of personal

security, of the negation of the rights of the citizen in Russia. The general truth is known by every one.

That of which the European reader is almost ignorant is the pitiable state of the Russian peasant, who, surrounded by republican institutions and his *mir*, is the victim of a formidable oppression, is oppressed by a despotism of which the most unhappy of the proletarians of the West have no idea.

What can be the causes of so paradoxical a phenomenon?

These are especially to be sought in the backward state of civilization of the people, in the extreme ignorance that narrows their horizon and makes them slaves to a thousand superstitions.

Without exaggeration it may be said that the Russian people only see citizen life within the confined limits of their *mir*.

All the more complex political or economical problems are to them quite as incomprehensible, quite as outside their understanding and their will, as those of nature. Does a favourite by dint of platitudes get 10,000 serfs from the empress, serfs who until then were free and independent peasants? Does an *entrepreneur*, say of the present time, receive from the Government an advance of a million roubles for a shady transaction ruining thousands of small tradespeople? These are in the eyes of the people phenomena of *force majeure* passing understanding, and against which, therefore, they can do nothing.

Whence was the squall let loose that threw the village into ruins? How to triumph over it?

Whence did the favourite or the speculator swoop down upon the peasant? How to defend himself against these? All these questions are equally unanswerable by the peasant. In the region of high politics, as in that of physical phenomena, the populace live in a fantastic world, having nothing in common with reality. The peasant sends a message to the tzar with as much faith as he celebrates mass and prays for an end to the drought. For he has no more idea of the government of heaven than of that of earth. This is not the result of the small development of his intellect, but of extreme ignorance. The peasant reasons very well on what he knows; the unfortunate thing is, that he knows scarcely anything.

The backward civilization of Russia ceases to astonish us if we remember that for centuries the Russian people were cut off from all communication with civilized nations. They only came into contact with savage tribes, their inferiors at all points. The fruits of the labours of the human reason and of science were inaccessible to them. Even at the present time the people are in many cases fetish-worshippers and pagan, since they can only judge of heaven and earth from a limited number of observations made within the narrow circle of their field, their forest, their *mir*. Is it then a matter of astonishment that, taking as their basis so few facts, the people can form no idea of the laws of phenomena, cannot get to know the very groundwork of human science, to know that which alone can draw man out of slavery to nature and society? The peasants of Olonetz, says M. Hielserding, told him

tales of giants with the firmest belief in them. But they understood very well that there were no giants now-a-days. "Of course," they said, "there are not. That's because the world is declining; but there were plenty of them in former times." Moreover, the peasant is certain there are no more *liechi*.¹ "Formerly there were plenty. Now the forests are cut down, and the poor devils don't know where to hide themselves." In this there is no want of individual observation—on the contrary, the observation is very accurate—but an utter want of acquaintance with the laws of nature.

There is always a basis of anthropomorphism in the religious opinions of the people, especially in those of the White Russians, the most backward of Russian races. Look at the way in which the White Russian songs represent God. They tell of feasts at God's house, in which "God Himself sweetens the hydromel, while Elias the prophet brews the beer." One day God is looking for Elias in vain.

"Elias is off to the corn-fields."

The Holy Virgin also attends to household affairs, and complains to God that she is fatigued.

"She bows herself down before God ;
And I, mon Dieu, have not been out a walk.
I've tilled the ground, the barley have I sown,
The barley sown, the barley reaped."

On one occasion a brother and sister go to search

¹ These fantastic beings of Russian mythology live in the forests, and amuse themselves by leading travellers astray.

for God. They find Him "hard by a barrel, drinking brandy."¹

A friend of mine brings from the province of Kouban similar testimony. Whilst there he often spoke to the Cossacks—the province is peopled by Little Russian Cossacks—about the different towns of Russia. One day a peasant said to him, with the most serious air; "Please tell me if you've been to the other world." My friend was half-offended at the question. He took it for a joke and a hint that his auditor did not quite believe all his tales. Yet the Cossack's inquiry was quite serious. A fellow-villager, returned from a pilgrimage, had told him that on his journey he had passed into heaven, where the dead folk of their village had asked him to salute in their name the relatives they had left behind. Thereupon he himself had set out straight for heaven, laden with presents from the countryside and with some money given him by the simple Cossacks for their dead friends. So it was natural enough that the Cossack should want to learn of my friend, whom he took to be a man of experience, how the way from earth to heaven was practicable.

Clearly so simple a method of looking upon the world and the things of the world must re-act upon the social life. Two years ago the Cossacks of the Don gave up contending with the locusts that invaded their fields, and took to saying masses instead. Speaking generally, the peasants have as much faith in the efficacy of religious ceremonies as in that of a doctor's drugs.

¹ Cheïn : "White Russian Songs."

"Why is it such a bad harvest?" the peasant asks himself.

"Because," he answers, "the priests now-a-days have a salary. Formerly even the popes tilled the ground. Then they said mass fervently that the good God might yield an abundant harvest. Now, it is the same to them one way or the other, and they say their prayers carelessly."

Even at the present time, to be accused of witchcraft in Russian villages is a real danger. Sometimes such an accusation leads to the most tragic results. Every now and again the Russian journals publish the news of the burning of a supposed sorcerer. Yet the peasants very often have recourse to sorcerers. Some years back, in the village of Megletzi (government of Novgorod), the loan and savings bank of the village society was broken into. The village assembly resolved on consulting a sorcerer in order to find out the robber. The sorcerer set to work publicly. He told the peasants to look at a bucket full of water, and gave to each of them a mystic piece of stick that, according to him, would grow larger in the hand of the thief.

In cases of epidemics, the peasants, instead of making use of hygienic measures, sometimes employ the *opaklivanie*. This method of conjuration is as follows.

Late on a dark night certain women, hair dishevelled, garments flowing, yoke themselves to a plough, and plough a furrow round the land they want to shield from the visit of death. The ceremony is accompanied by savage chants that the women scream out at the top of their voices; but these chants are to the men a mystery. Their eyes

may not see the ceremony, and woe to him whom, perchance, the procession meets upon his way. He is overwhelmed with blows, and even runs the risk of being torn in pieces. Naturally, therefore, when the men hear the savage howling of the women they make haste to run away or hide.¹

These gross superstitions of the peasants are kept up and even fostered by the Church. In the ecclesiastical ritual are many exorcisms not differing from those of witchcraft, whose effects, indeed, they are often intended to counteract. If by chance a peasant finds a *zalome*² on his field, he has recourse in his trouble, with equal faith, to the sorcerer or to the pope.

It is not astonishing that in Russia an accusation of witchcraft may be a weapon used at times in political contests. It is especially employed against sectaries. These, always sober, hard-working, intelligent, hold, despite the persecutions of the Government, a position of ease and competence far in advance of that enjoyed by the orthodox. Thereupon it is pretended that they get their money from the devil. I myself heard a tale of this kind from a wretch who swore that he with his own eyes had seen a *chlapoute*—the name of one of the sects—talking to the devil, who rose from a vat full of water, and gave him gold.

In 1873, against the socialists, even at St. Petersburg, the same accusation of witchcraft was made.

¹ Some years ago a case of *opakhivanié* occurred even near Moscow, at Fili.

² A *zalome* is a bundle of stalks of wheat, bound, with exorcisms, in a special way. If an enemy makes you a *zalome*, your wheat is ruined unless you nullify its power by appropriate exorcisms.

Thus does superstition encroach upon politics. And this is the more easy as the peasants have, as I said, only a very confused idea as to social questions. Some of them do not even know that the tsar is an hereditary monarch. The peasants of a village in the government of Simbirsk imagined that the tsar was chosen at regular intervals by the senate. This is, of course, an exceptional case ; but generally the peasants' ideas as to the tsar are altogether fantastic. Often they look upon him as a representative and protector of the people, whose one care is their welfare. Only the grandees always prevent him from helping them. How ? That is a mystery, a matter beyond conception. It is always a case of the tsar having recourse to a ruse that he may get the better of the grandees and senators. This, *e.g.* is the way in which the popular legend tells the story of the abolition of serfdom.

The tsar was for a long time busied about the question, but could do nothing. How to set about the deliverance of the people ? At last he found out the way. Clad in the grand uniform and laden with the orders of Nicolas I., the tsar went to the senate.

"Senators," he said, "have I the right to clothe myself in this uniform, to wear these orders ?"

"No, sire," answered the senators ; "your late father had a right to this uniform and these orders ; not you."

On another occasion the tsar came to the senate in the state dress of Alexander I. The senators told him he had no right to wear it, since not lie but his uncle had been judged worthy of this.

A third time the tzar came to the senate, dressed in his own uniform and wearing his own orders.

"You did rightly to put these on," said the senators to him, "since you yourself are entitled to these."

Then the tzar answered :

"Very well, members of the senate, very well. Pass then a decree that any one may enjoy what he has gained for himself, but not what his fathers or his ancestors have gained."

Then the senators saw he had caught them in a trap. What was to be done ? They were compelled to sign the decree.

For the tzar asked them :

"Members of the senate, how did you get your peasants ?"

One had them from his father, another from his grandfather, a third from some more remote ancestor. Not one had obtained them for himself. The senators had to recognise that the rights of the nobles over the peasants must be abolished.

Thus the abolition of serfdom came about.¹

Here is another legend, belonging to the domain of high politics. It is quoted by Ouspensky.²

Why did the Turko-Russian war break out ?

"Because," says the peasant, "in the Turkish land there is a bull of great antiquity. A vast treasure, maybe the source of all the gold in the world, is

¹ This legend, published for the first time, if I am not mistaken, in the socialist journal, *Land and Liberty*, is confirmed by the testimony of many writers who have studied the life of the people.

² Ouspensky is a contemporary writer of ability, and a close observer of peasant life.

buried under the hind hoof of this bull. The tsar wanted to conquer him. Then the "peasants need pay no more taxes."

On another occasion, clearly as result of the spread among the people of socialist books and pamphlets, the following legend arose. A monster some scores of verstes long fell from the sky into one of the governments. On his back is engraven everything that is going to happen, but as yet no one has deciphered the writing. The authorities rigorously forbid the reading of it.

Political events, it will be seen, are at times reflected in popular thought even now-a-days, in a purely mythical way.

Of course it would be a great blunder to judge the intellectual condition of the people solely by these proofs of its ignorance. These are only exceptional cases; but it is evident that a population which invents legends of this kind cannot form very reasonable judgments on political questions. As long as human thought cannot break the bonds of mythical conceptions, its development is incomplete. This incomplete development is to-day the great social vice of Russia.

Only a hundred years ago even gentlemen, we must remember, did not look upon corporal punishment as derogatory from their dignity. Some ten years ago people found guilty of political crimes by the third section of the Imperial Chancellorship (the secret police) were still subject to such punishment.

In common law trials torture has only been suppressed since 1801. As to political trials, it is not yet altogether suppressed in practice.

Up to the time of Peter the Great, the Russians called themselves "kholops"¹ in their official relations with the emperor. Peter modified this formula, and ordered them to use henceforward the title "rabs" instead of "kholops." Catherine I., in her turn, substituted the name "subject" for "rab."

Sometimes in Russia, even in those administrations, such as the medical section, where culture is at its best, the chiefs "tutoyer."² In the army the officers are obliged to "tutoyer" their soldiers.

If in this respect Little Russia is more advanced, this coarseness of manners, reflex of the contempt for all human rights and dignity, is carried to extreme among the Great Russians. In Great Russia corporal punishment is everywhere and habitually imposed by the tribunals of the "volost." They beat a husband who deserts his wife, a wife wanting in respect to her husband, sons who disobey their father, fathers who have not paid their taxes, etc. This debased contempt for human dignity has been evolved everywhere under the influence of "that ancient great family" which Russian reactionaries rightly regard as the most solid buttress of "conservative principles."

This institution of the "ancient great family" must not be passed over in silence. It has been to the moral development of the Russian people an obstacle of not less importance than serfdom.

In the time of our grandfathers, these families were composed of from twenty to thirty members, often of as many as fifty to sixty. They were sub-

¹ "Kholops," serfs in a derogatory sense; "rabs," merely serfs.

² "If thou thou'st him some thrice."—*Twelfth Night*.

ject to the absolute authority of the elder of the family (*bolchak*), generally the grandfather of greatest age.¹ He superintended work, controlled consumption, regulated the marriages of the members of the family, etc. The family worked in common, took their meals together, and often lived in the same dwelling.

It is not difficult to imagine what a man would become in a life like this. Scores of eyes spy upon his every movement; he has neither will nor property, not even sentiments that he can call his own.

The despotic authority of the family and of the "bolchak" falls most heavily on the woman. The Russian songs are full of touching complaints against this state of servitude, and often picture the implacable revolts of the women for the re-conquest of their rights, now trodden under foot. The Little Russians have a very characteristic saying :

"Who is going to bring the water? The daughter-in-law.

Who is to be beaten? The daughter-in-law.

Why is she beaten? Because she is the daughter-in-law."²

The daughter-in-law is the slave of her husband, in his turn the slave of the "bolchak." Slave to her mother-in-law, who avenges on her the sufferings she had herself undergone aforetime, the young wife is in her new home a creature of endless toil, of ceaseless reproaches, of blows, of eternal renunciation of volition. She comes into her house still wearing her wedding-dress ; hell soon breaks out.

¹ In cases where the *bolchak* became decrepit to the extent of being unable to keep order, even during his life sometimes a younger "bolchak" was elected.

² Efimenko: The Peasant Woman, in her "Inquiries into the Life of the People."

“ Says father-in-law ;
 They have brought us a bear.
 Says mother-in-law ;
 They have brought us an eater of men.*
 Say the brothers-in-law ;
 They have brought us an unclean thing.
 Say the aunts ;
 They have brought us a spinner of naught.”

It is no use for the poor thing to try complaining to them all. She will not get a kindly word from one of them. Even the husband, supposing he cares for her, is powerless to protect her, as indeed a song of the Great Russians has it. The plaint of the woman overwhelmed with weariness :

“ I, the young wife, fall asleep,
 Head bowed down upon the pillow.
 Husband’s father in the passage,
 My new passage, walks in anger,
 Striking, roaring, striking, roaring,
 I can get no wink of slumber.
 Get up, get up, sleepy-head !
 Get up, get up, sleepy
 Sleepy, sleepy-head and feckless !”

The poor thing shudders, tries to rise, has not the strength.

“ I, the young wife, fall asleep,
 Head bowed down upon the pillow.”

Then the mother-in-law comes like a thunderbolt. More scolding more upbraiding.

“ Sleepy, sleepy-head and feckless !”

And the husband ? The husband can do nothing. He sees the injustice of it all, but he can only murmur in secret, compassionating his wife, who falls asleep in spite of herself.

"Sleep, sleep, my girl ;
Sleep, sleep, my sweetest.
Tired out, and worn out, married over-young."

But what are blows, upbraiding, work ? The despotic authority of the "bolchak" leads to worse abuses. The popular language is even enriched with a quite special word, "snokhatch."² The dramas of the law-courts often present frightful scenes of jealousy between father and son. Sometimes they show the former falling under the axe of the latter, or poisoned by the young wife for the wrong he has done her. The "large family" is a veritable school of slavery. A man brought up in its midst will bear, without any sense of shame, the most bloody despotism of law or of government.

¹ Chein : "Great Russian Songs," vol. i., p. 335.

² This might be translated by the neologism, "daughter-in-lawing." Seduction of the daughter by the father-in-law is common.

CHAPTER V.

The people take part in the moral movement.—The schism ; its causes and effects.—The sectaries : their *rôle* in Russia itself.—The action of Europe.—The educated classes draw near the people.—Tolstoï ministry ; Russian schools.—The “otkhojié promysly.”—Their importance in the life of the Russian people.—Disappearance of the “ancient family.”—Family partitions.

IT is undeniable that these traditional faults of the Russian people are much less marked now than they were, and are constantly becoming less noticeable. A moral revolution is going on at the heart of the mass of the people. They are claiming their rights and are learning how to conquer them. From this point of view, the end of the 17th century may be looked upon as the crisis in Russian history.

After the great national wars against the Swedes and the Poles, an intellectual renaissance manifested itself everywhere.

On the one hand, an educated class arises, tries with much effort to bring Russia into relation with Europe, and to acclimatize among us European civilization. Among the men who take part in the task that the tzarevna Sophia and Peter the Great set themselves, there are many of the people. But they do not really represent the people, since they

are in advance of their age. In the population as a whole, another current is perceptible, equally due to the awakinging of soul and of intellect. That is the schism (raskol).

The schism gives us a picture of the mental condition of the Russian people in a not very encouraging light. It broke out in consequence of the reform undertaken by the patriarch Nikon, with a view of centralizing the clergy, getting it away from the influence of the parishioners, regulating its ceremonies in harmony with the ritual of the Greek Church. This reform kindled the flames of war. Nikon said people should cross themselves with three fingers; the "raskolniks" said two were enough, and appealed to the old pictures, in which the saints are represented crossing themselves with two fingers. Nikon was for singing "Alleluia" three times; the "raskolniks" said it need only be sung twice. All the controversies were of the like importance. None the less they were of sufficient moment for the two parties to call one another heretics, for the "staroobriadtzi" (partisans of the ancient ritual) to be burned alive in the firm conviction that they would be damned if they crossed themselves in any other way than with two fingers. In both camps fanaticism reigned supreme.

Those who at the present time represent the "raskolniks," point out a more fundamental reason for the schism. They declare that it was not a matter of ceremonial forms. Such forms are established by custom, and it is not only the clergy who are concerned in them. The faithful play their part. They think, therefore, that it is not permissible to

make a change in the ritual without the consent of the Church. 'And this is no other than the consent of the whole body of believers. All that the spirit of antichrist, working in Nikon, does, is to shut out the faithful from the Church, and to arrogate for the clergy a despotic authority over the consciences of the faithful.'¹ In point of fact, the ancient Russian Church was built on much more democratic lines; the faithful chose their own priests. To sum up: in the schism can be seen a very acute protest of the people against the despotic tendencies of the superior clergy, although it can be said with perfect truth that the schismatics believed in their eight-pointed cross as the savage in his fetish.

Thought, once awakened, cannot fall back into slumber, even though it has at first no other ground on which to work than clerical scholarship. It developed, it advanced. The incredible persecutions of the "raskolniks," drove them to transfer their criticisms from the Church to the Government. They declared that the tzar was Antichrist. A number of sects were soon obliged to do without priests, and even made this a dogma of their religion. The right of every one to discuss religious questions was, as a consequence, fully admitted. That spirit which until then had been the slave of ritual, of a wooden image, of a cross of copper, became master of itself.

At the present time, the number of "staroobriadtzi" and of sectaries may be estimated at from twelve to fifteen millions. They are split up into

¹ See "The Modern Contest of the Schism," in the *Messenger of Europe*.

a motley crowd of doctrines and sects; some of them are notable for their coarse fanaticism, e.g. that of skoptzi (castrates). One part of the "staroobriadtzi," the "popovchtchina," which calls itself the ancient orthodox Church, replaces the authority of the official Church by its own. The latter clearly cannot contribute much to the spread of free inquiry. On the other hand, all the "bezpopovchtchina" sects tend undoubtedly to turn to pure rationalism. For the rest, this is nearly the end attained by the "spiritual Christians." As a rule the sectaries are the most advanced portion of the people. They know how to read and write, and are wonderfully well up in Scripture. But it is not Scripture only that they study. Their "natchottchiks" (learned men) know Renan, are familiar with history, interested in the literature of social questions. Such "natchottchiks" as the celebrated Paul the Curious, are sometimes, as far as literary faculty and learning go, much above their adversaries, the doctors of the theological academies. As a general rule, the sectaries are remarkable for their morality, sobriety, intelligence, and activity.

It is notable that all the present sects differ from the old ones in the greater stress they lay on social principles. They pay less attention to dogmas, more to the questions of morality and social life. They rarely enter into the arena of pure politics.¹

¹ There are exceptions, amongst which must be mentioned the sect of the "stranniks" or "biégouni" (fugitives). This sect looks on the tsar as Antichrist, and believes that some day the faithful will gather together and fight his army. In the meantime they will have absolutely nothing to do with any social institu-

But in that of social life they teach the people many pure and healthy ideas.

It is impossible, *e.g.* not to note the prominent part played by women among our schismatics. With them, women are in all relations the equals of men. Very often they exercise the functions of chiefs of sects.

Among these last, marriage—a free union—depends much less on formal obligations and much more upon moral duties.

The communes of the sectaries are often very interesting associations. No member can become indigent. He is helped, and not allowed to be ruined. These associations (among the "chalapoutes") are often composed of many families owning and cultivating the soil in common. In them individual independence is happily blended with collective possession and labour.

The sectaries do a great deal towards the destruction of national exclusiveness. It is in this that the "soubotniks" (sabbatarians) are like the Jews. The "stundistes" seemed some fifteen years ago under the influence of the propaganda of the German colonists dwelling in the south of Russia. Now the "stundistes" are far in advance of their masters. Generally speaking, our sects bring into the life of the people many civilizing elements, and

tions. They run away from military service, do not pay taxes, will not use passports, do not enter upon any business in which the intervention of the law is required. With such opinions it is clear that they must lead a wandering life, seeking shelter from the persecutions of authority. And they have learnt to build them houses cleverly contrived with many secret passages and recesses for hiding.

historically they may be looked upon as its most active educators.

At the same time that the "raskol" was developing in Russia, that country entered upon a new stage of evolution, even more important in its consequences than this. I am speaking of its closer relationship with Europe and the importation of European civilization into Russia. The knowledge thus acquired has for a long time had but a feeble effect ~~on~~ the people; it was the appanage of a more or less privileged and small minority. Thanks, however, to the exigencies of human development in masses of population, it penetrated to a certain extent, as it were by a network of capillary threads, the Russian populace.

Since the abolition of serfdom the influence of the educated class upon the people has increased to a remarkable extent. To draw the people more closely to itself has become its favourite dream; to this end schools, popular books, personal intercourse were the best means. Then the reactionary party interfered. Count Dmitri Tolstoi became minister of public instruction, and his administration was of such a nature that a jest, popular throughout Russia, called it the ministry of public ignorance. In Russia the minister of public education is called the minister of public knowledge. He tried as much as lay in his power to prevent the founding of primary schools, by creating obstacles insurmountable even for the "zemstvo," much more for private individuals.

The number of schools in European Russia is reckoned at not less than 22,770, with 1,140,000 scholars (904,000 boys; 236,000 girls). Of course,

this is small for Russia, as the number of scholars scarcely reaches 2 per cent. of the whole population. Poland stands in the first place (4 per cent. of its population); Russia proper is already below the average (scarcely 1 per cent.); Siberia lower still ('3 per cent.). It may be noted that as concerns primary schools, the Germans of the Baltic, who plume themselves so much on their civilizing mission, are not much in advance of Siberia. Only '7 per cent. of their population are in the schools. From this we can form an estimate of their dread of letting civilization penetrate among the conquered and dispossessed natives.

The Russian Government acts towards its people in the same way. With a budget of eight hundred millions of roubles, it only spends three millions on primary schools. The "zemstvo" adds five millions to this ridiculous sum; but even ~~the~~ the reader can see to how small an extent the first rudiments of knowledge—reading and writing—are within reach of the Russian people.

The statistics of primary education among the people can only be guessed at. But we have exact returns of the number of young people that can read who have been taken for military service. In 1882 more than 76 per cent. could not read. About 20 per cent. of the peasant and artisan conscripts may be reckoned as knowing how to read. Slow as it is, there is already some little progress here, since in 1870 only 11 per cent. of the conscripts knew how to read, and in 1868 only 8 per cent.

Insignificant as are the means of education within reach of the people, they use them with great ardour.

The Russian is very impressionable. His intellect is asleep ; but he is not stupid. Education, say the people, is the light ; ignorance, the darkness, and they long for teaching. They give attentive ear to the words of skilled men, observe closely every new fact. Public lectures, given to the artisans of St. Petersburg and the environs in 1880-3, were attended by over 50,000 people. In the museums of Moscow and of St. Petersburg few visitors are so observant as the artisan, small shopkeeper, and the like. For instance, if you go on a holiday to the entrance of the Roumiantsov Museum in Moscow, you will see a crowd of working-people waiting patiently, long before the time of opening, for the appointed hour. Woe to you if by chance you enter into conversation with a workman ! He will not leave you ; he asks minute questions about everything he sees, from the skeleton of a whale to a piece of machinery. Thanks to this desire for education, what is called "work away from home" ("otkhojé promysly") must be looked upon as a most powerful agent in the education of the people.

The "otkhojé promysly" are temporary absences from their own villages of workmen who emigrate in search of employment. This is done on a very large scale. Every year, scores and even hundreds of thousands of workmen, before the work in the fields begins, invade the railway stations and journey south, towards those fertile steppes where the magnificent meadows and harvests need ten times as many workers as the indigenous population can supply. There, also, in the ports of the Black Sea and of the Sea of Azov, the workers find employment

in the lading of ships. In the north, the “*otkhojé promysly*” are due to the rafts of drift-wood and the like. When the summer work and that of shipping are over, just the opposite phenomenon is to be seen. The stream of workers sets into the towns, to work there in factories, at carting, etc.

Some idea of the magnitude of the “*otkhojé promysly*” may be formed from one or two figures. St. Petersburg alone contains more than 200,000 of these workmen; there are in Moscow more than 250,000. It is the same in the other large towns.¹

This great multitude does not break its connection with the villages of its birth. Many peasants pass the winter in the towns and return home when the time for working in the fields has come. Others have their families living in the villages. Yet others live in the towns, even with wife and children, but only for so long a time as is necessary for the amassing of a small capital by which they can start again in the village the establishment they have left for a while. Finally others, whilst they live in the towns, visit from time to time their relations in the villages. The influence of the “skilled men” on the peasants is enormous. Through them, a mass

¹ There come to St. Petersburg and Moscow, in search of work, from the governments of—

Moscow	11·5	per cent. of the male population.
Iaroslav	12·3	“ ” ”
Tver	5·0	“ ” ”
Other governments near	5·0	“ ” ”

The women more rarely leave their villages. But the government of Iaroslav sends to St. Petersburg and Moscow 2·5 per cent. of its female population; the government of Tver 2 per cent. It must not be forgotten that there are besides many peasants who go to other places. (See Ianson: “Statistics,” vol. i. pp. 369, 370.)

of knowledge of the most varied kind, and new ideas, habits, needs, enter the village. • These habits are not always good ones. The factory-hand often becomes spoilt ; gets in the habit of haunting cafés, and makes acquaintance with prostitutes. On the other hand, he brings back to the village acquisitions that could not be picked up at the official school. He is used to an independent life, to the free disposal of himself. It is no wonder that in his turn he becomes the pet of the girls and the "mould of form" for the young men. It is no wonder that he is gorlan (a brawler), head of the opposition to the "stariks" (elders of the village) in the meetings, and contemptuous of the authority of the "bolchaks" in the family.

Under the influence of these different causes, the knowledge of their-rights awakens and grows in the ranks of the people, undermining the old patriarchal *régime* and preparing the way for a new and more humane form. One only of the many signs of this awakening I will quote, the one especially deplored of the conservatives. It is the family sharings-up, against which the Government of Alexander II. is beginning to take legislative measures. The old "great family" is disappearing. The yoke which their fathers and grandfathers bore with patience, the younger generation find unbearable. As soon as he is married, the peasant makes haste to separate himself from the family and set up housekeeping on his own account. The wife plays a very important part in this change of custom—a fact certainly not astonishing if the state of the woman in the "old family" is borne in mind. Her instinct of indepen-

dence can no longer adapt itself to the old fetters. Our village tribunals receive numbers of complaints from the women against the oppression of their husbands and of the older members of the family. When complaints and protests are unavailing, the wife acts.

The songs of these latter days throw a vivid light on this struggle. The wife declares that she is no longer the submissive creature of former times.

“A maiden I,
I got me married with no childish mind.”

She assumes the defensive. She gives blow for blow. She answers the insults of the old people by insults ten times as great. To their grumblings she responds :

“Father-in-law, up in the loft,
Is like a dog tied up with string ;
Mother-in-law, hard by the stove,
Is like another, tied up too.”

As a matter of course such a crime of high-treason must be punished ; but the wife, in her defence, does not stop at the most extreme measures—

“You squint horribly ;
I’m not afraid of you ;
You dare not knock me down,”

says she to her husband. And when the row breaks out, she defends herself valiantly.

“The husband let out with his hand,
And boxed his wife upon the ear ;
The wife she let out with her hand,
And hit him right across the face.”

In a word, the wife makes such a hell of the family that the old people themselves are inclined

to beg the young ones to go away. The young household takes its departure, builds a separate "izba," obtains a plot of land. And this is going on from one extremity of Russia to the other.

In the government of Moscow (excepting the town of Moscow itself) the population has increased 8 per cent. from 1858 to 1881, whilst the number of separate establishments has in the same time increased 40 per cent. The number of the peasants in the province of Dankov (government of Riazan) has increased in the same time 26 per cent.; the number of establishments, 87 per cent.

The change is noticeable even in the most distant parts of the country. In the province of Morchansk, an increase of 23 per cent. in the number of peasants is accompanied by an increase of 55 per cent. in the number of separate establishments.¹

The splitting up of the families is among the most important phases in the life of the peasant of to-day. It is creating an altogether new type of village. We have already seen that the same generation which is breaking up the "old family" is showing an energetic tendency to keep up the communal tenure of the soil, which thus loses the last traces of its archaic origin. On the other hand, these splittings up weaken the working force of the families and do great injury to the peasant households. Everybody complains of them. But ought not these very divisions to bring home to the peasants the necessity of a free association in place of the obligatory association of the "great family" now moribund?

¹ Chein: "Great Russian Songs," vol. i.

BOOK IV.

THE SOCIAL CLASSES.

THE CLERGY, NOBILITY, AND *BOURGEOISIE*.

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.—Is there any other organic force in Russia than the people and the tsar?—The Muscovite autocracy, and its part in history.—Its degeneration into tyranny.—The tzars try to concentrate around them the upper classes, tamed.

CHAP. II.—The Russian clergy.—Church organization.—The part played by our clergy as police.—Black and white clergy.—Tyranny of the black clergy.—Absence of moral influence.—Persecution of the raskol.—Tolstoi's clergy.—Nihilism carries off the flower of the ecclesiastical youth.—The real clergy and the imperial policy.

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CHAP. IV.—The *bourgeoisie*.—*Bourgeoisie* of the towns.—Our capitalism.—No third estate in Russia.—Primitive accumulation.—Frauds and thefts the source of fortunes.—Business jobbers.—The village *bourgeoisie*: koulaks and miroïèds.

CHAPTER I.

Is there any other organic force in Russia than the people and the tzar?—The Muscovite autocracy, and its part in history.—Its degeneration into tyranny.—The tzars try to concentrate around them the upper classes, tamed.

THE mass of the people has detained us for some time. In thus dwelling upon them, we have only done that which all who study the Russia of the present time must do. The importance of the masses of the people, the consequence of their enormous numerical superiority and of their moral condensation, strikes every observer at once. In the Russian publications, especially in the works of the Slavophiles, the statement often occurs, that “among us there is no independent force other than that of the people and that of the tzar.” This opinion, although exaggerated, has a certain amount of truth in it. It shows the relative weakness of the upper classes.

Although in old Russia—the Russia of the principalities—the landed aristocracy and the business class had been able to come into being and to develop, the crisis of the invasions and wars gave, in the 12th and 13th centuries, a definite blow, as we have said, to this initiation and to this development. The whole of the old social order was

shaken to its foundation, without hope of any possible consolidation.

The *bourgeoisie* lost their wealth. The princely aristocracy, whose dissensions had weakened Russia, lost for ever their prestige. Their rule remained in the eyes of the people henceforth a synonym of disorder, of civil war, of mean tyranny. At the same time, as we have seen, the necessity for national independence led to the idea of condensation, organization, unity.¹ The development of the “*volostnoié samoou-pravlenié*” (the self-government of the “*volosts*”) among the people grew stronger and stronger. Incapable of organizing the State themselves, the people supported with energy the first who, already in possession of power, showed themselves capable of exterminating the aristocracy and of giving unity to Russia.

This was the part played by the Muscovite princes, who soon took the name of tzars.

The Muscovite house of the Danilovitchs (or of Ivan Kalita) became so lost in the ranks of the quite secondary princely families that it was indistinguishable from them. The Muscovite princes were above all landed proprietors (“*votchinniki*”). They thought first of all of their own interests, those of their families and of their property. But the geographical situation of Moscow made this town the centre of operations in the struggle between the Russians and the Tartars. Thanks to this fact, Moscow became the rallying-point of patriots and statesmen, of all the living forces of Russia. These men, gathering round the Muscovite princes, gave

¹ Book iii., page 105.

their policy a rare wisdom, a prudence and firmness, that soon caused the eyes of all the people to be fixed upon these princes. With a firm hand they carried out the great national work of Russian unification by destroying the princely aristocracy. Seeing this firmness of hand, the people everywhere gave support to Moscow. Even the regions subject to the authority of the merchant republic of Novgorod betrayed their capital; and the Government of the republic in vain uttered threats against its own subjects to prevent them from going over to Moscow.

A century later, Russia unified was able to begin the work of her own deliverance.

It is not to be denied then that the Muscovite aristocracy has been of great service to Russia. It is, in fact, clear, that the tzars could only carry out the work of freeing the nation by virtue of an absolute and illimitable dictatorship. The government of the tzars, however, had very few elements for making a moral unity between it and the people possible. On the contrary, there were the germs of a fundamental contradiction between the authority of the State—as the result of its historic development—and the inevitable development of the masses of the people.

The Muscovite State came into being at the time when history was beginning to make of Russia a “country of peasants.”¹

The people, under the influence of the colonizing labour and movement,—under the stimulus, in fine, of the crude experiments they were making,—began

¹ Kostomarov: “History of Novgorod, Pskov, and Viatka,” pp. 70, 71, 78, 127, 128, 135, 141, etc.

organizing on the basis of communal holding. The old patriarchal organization (by family and clan) received its first shock. In a confused sort of way the people tried to recognise the principle of the will of the people, of the public weal. A hundred and fifty to two hundred years after, there could be no longer any doubt as to the direction the popular development had taken ; the rural commune and the Cossack organization gave striking instances of this.

What could the Muscovite State have in common with an evolution of this kind ?

It owed its origin to the old methods of landed property and the traditions of the clans ("votchinnosemeinoié natchalo"). It could not, as is self-evident, abandon itself. The interest of the tzar's family, the interests of their followers ("dvornia") naturally held the first place in the thoughts of the Muscovite State. For the tzars, the interests of Russia were identical with the interest of their growing estates ; the well-being of the people, with the flourishing condition of their domains. The tzars and boyards might at times serve the people's interest ; their agitations might even at times coincide with those new tendencies that were gradually taking possession of all the people. But still more frequently the Government, true to its own line of development, opposed that of the people, and, whether involuntarily or with full knowledge of what it was doing, used every effort to put an end to that development.

Only, the tzars were to some extent aware of this divergence ; the people were not. These, scattered over enormous areas, taken up with their painful

struggle for existence, were able to exercise no control over the acts of the Government, could not very well understand the course it was taking, and, if they supported the tzars, did not approve their policy in detail. The people only supported in the tzars the one popular authority that was equally above every one. The sentiment of democratic equality made the mass of the people sympathize with the tzars and help them in their work of putting an end to the privileged classes. Were the tzars always the champions of equality? The people fully believed so without inquiry or examination. Here was one of those many illusions that got the mastery of the untutored popular mind, and have ere this made so many Cæsars in history.

Thanks to this unconditional support of the masses, and to their impotence to hold the aristocracy in check by their own power, the authority of the tzars takes on the appearance of an immense and independent political force. The tsar does what he likes, because the people always give him their support, even when what he does strikes a blow at the interests of the people. There is only one thing the tsar would never be able to do, even if he wished—limit his own authority by that of any privileged class whatever. The people would recognise no compromise of this kind and at once would put an end to it; for the tsar, relying on the people, could, when such was his good pleasure, begin again to act after his own sweet will and fancy. Thus the restrictions that the boyards imposed on the Romanovs became at once null and void, as soon as the tzars took it into their heads to get rid of them.

All the earlier half of the 18th century, filled with palace revolts, gave our nobility many a favorable opportunity of limiting the power of the autocracy. But the results of these attempts show us that the nobles could only change the tzars, or even kill them, but could not formally limit their power, even according to the most elementary notions of the rights of man.

Thenceforward, the Russian autocracy had every facility to degenerate into a veritable tyranny. It seems unnecessary even to give examples of the absurd despotism to which it attained. Ivan the Terrible killed his own son; he killed the metropolitan Philip, whom the Church canonized; he killed men by tens, by hundreds, by thousands. All these murders were unpunished. Only eighty years ago they had to suffocate another tyrant-madman, who proved that a return to the time of Ivan the Terrible was no impossibility in the Russia of this century, Russia Europeanized! The caprices of Paul I. are notable for their extravagance. I am not speaking of the torture, the exilings, the confiscations. All these are inherent in despotic rule. But Paul I. regulated by ukase the dress of his subjects; he decreed that certain words of the language were not to be used; his fancies, sometimes of a bloody nature, could not in many cases be put into decent language. Once, at a court-ball, an officer by accident tore the empress's train. The emperor flew into a passion. He sent for the criminal and began abusing him. Then growing more and more wrathful, he roared, "Turn him out of the army!" This decree failed to calm him. Shouting at the top of

his voice, he said to one of the high officials, "Send him out of St. Petersburg at once." Then, still pouring forth a torrent of abuse, and growing more and more angry, he went on; "Let him be banished to his own estate."

"Sire," one of the ministers observed, "he has no estate."

"Then give him one with three hundred men on it!"

This was the final form of the decree. The officer had his three hundred peasants.

It is difficult to disentangle in all this the emperor's rage, the emperor's benevolence, and the end the emperor wanted to attain.

I am not aware to what extent this story can be believed, but *si non e vero e ben trovato*; for it sums up his rule.

The defenders of the Russian monarchy use every endeavour to show that it and despotism are not one and the same thing. But if the Russian autocracy is not despotism, despotism does not exist. In the Mussulman tyrannies there is at least a "chariat." In Russia, the Emperor Nicolas I. sends his ministerial council the heads of certain transactions with a note something in this style: "I ask Messieurs my ministers to read this and to be assured that in cases of this kind we cannot act according to the laws."¹ In the most favourable circumstances the law holds good only in so far as the imperial ordinances allow, and, in point of fact, the arbitrary power of the tzar is only limited by physical

¹ Russian translation of Lorentz' History, with Appendix by Markov.

obstacles or social and economic conditions that nothing can modify.

This characteristic of the political authority that is the result of the Moscow and St. Petersburg periods, makes that authority a very convenient instrument for political intrigue. If any class in the country had a really solid basis, it would not put up with such a form of government as the Russian autocracy. Moreover, the Russian tzars constantly quarrelled with their boyards,¹ who had not yet forgotten the part they had formerly played in Russia. When the old families finally lost their prestige or were for the most part extinct, the whole of Russia was, in a sense, reduced to a dead level. From that time to the present no class was capable of ruling the people by its own strength.

However, the natural splitting-up of the people into classes took place in Russia as everywhere else; and these classes or their embryos always found in the authority of the autocrats an instrument and a sustainer of their own forces.

As regards the tzars and the emperors, one is always conscious of the anomaly between the State they have created and that which logically ought to be born of the social ideas of the people. Doubtless the latter have not developed their institutions so far that they can draw from them any general conclusion. The tzars, however, seem to see that this

¹ I call by this generic name all those remnants of the old landed aristocracy who, after losing their rights of sovereignty, attached themselves to the Muscovite tzars in the capacity of councillors and aids in government matters. In the 16th century the number of these families was about 200.

conclusion is inevitable, and are trying to secure themselves against it beforehand by preparing for themselves a firm support in the privileged classes, who, to keep the people in check, would be obliged, for their own sake, to maintain the authority of the tzar. The autocrats have not had to dread these classes as rivals hitherto. Besides, independently of their own deliberate efforts, the concentration around their throne of the privileged classes occurred as a matter of course, and then, as logical consequence, came the influence of these classes on the tzars. These last were far removed from the people, and the nobles and rich folk were by their side. The absence of all control over what they did gave full liberty to any individual personal influence over them. Further, we see in Russia every one having recourse—and with success—to the protection of the tzar; nobility, clergy, *bourgeoisie*. The Government lends to these constant support, develops zealously their forces, and, what is yet more important, employs its authority on their behalf to crush out all resistance, all protest on the part of the people. It is, *e.g.* beyond a doubt that to the trust of the people in the tzars the nobility owe the fact that they have not been massacred by the peasants a score of times. The people put up with the nobles only because they imagine that through them the tzar will accomplish something of use to the people themselves.

The history of our upper classes is thus rigidly bound up with the policy of the tzars, whilst at the same time the State is continually under the influence of the privileged classes, remaining their

protector only, without ever becoming their representative—a part easy to play with the help of the forces provided by the trust of the masses of the people.

CHAPTER II.

The Russian clergy.—Church organization.—The part played by our clergy as police.—Black and white clergy.—Tyranny of the black clergy.—Absence of moral influence.—Persecution of the raskol.—Tolstoi's clergy.—Nihilism carries off the flower of the ecclesiastical youth.—The real clergy and the imperial policy.

LET US NOW EXAMINE A LITTLE MORE CLOSELY THE CHARACTER AND CONDITION OF OUR UPPER CLASSES.

I begin with the clergy, although they have no greater importance than any of the other classes.

The Russian Church has never attained the degree of strength and importance that the Catholic has enjoyed. To such an extent is it dependent on the State that, even among its clergy, voices are at times raised bemoaning that “the Church is in captivity in Babylon.”

The supreme power of the Russian Church is centred in the Synod, composed of certain archbishops nominated by the Government. This fact alone deprives it of all independence. The Synod is forced to conform to the orders of the Government, the more so as the emperor is also to a certain extent, even according to the ecclesiastical statutes, the head of the Church.¹

¹ In the 16th century the Government itself, with a political end, created the patriarchate in the Church. By this it freed the

The Synod has no political power ; it takes no part in the government of the State. It deals with politics only when the Government wants it to do so. *E.g.* the Church fulminated solemn maledictions against the different enemies of the *tsar* (the impostor Otrepiev, the insurgent Stenka Razine, the traitor Mazeppa, etc.) The popes have orders to preach against the aspirations of the people towards the division of the land, against the socialists, etc. After the assassination of Alexander II., the Church added to the ordinary prayers a special one : "Let us beseech the Lord that He exterminate these our fierce enemies who fashion plots."

This then is the political office of the Church. It will be seen that it is that of an employé, a policeman. And this becomes yet clearer, when it is

Russian Church from the influence of the patriarchate of Constantinople. The centralized Church showed some tendency to mix itself up with State affairs. Certain patriarchs, as Hermogène, Filarete, Nikon, played very important political parts. In Nikon's time, the Russian Church made pretensions that remind us of the Curia Romana. But these pretensions came to a sad end, for the Church. The people made a formidable protest against its despotism—the schism ("raskol.") On its part, the Government, whilst it attacked the "raskol," exiled Nikon. Then Peter the Great, to crush out once for all the political leanings of the Church, abolished the patriarchate and founded the Synod. In the middle of the 18th century, the Government confiscated all the landed property of the convents, and assigned them a fixed rent. The Church's independence was for ever destroyed. Thus the history of the Church undergoes the same vicissitudes as that of the nobility. The Church gains a political power, enormous to outward seeming, but only in so far as the *tsar* wills or allows it. The first *tsar* who wants to abolish that power, will do this without difficulty.

known that all the ecclesiastical services are subject to a strict censorship, and that models of sermons even are sent to the popes. Sometimes the intervention of the clergy takes on a very shameful¹ character—that of playing the spy. So great is the humiliation of the Church that, in some cases, the priest is obliged, by the very order of the Synod, to "make a report" to the police as to what is revealed to him in confession.¹

The causes of this disastrous position of the Russian Church, even within its own organization, must be investigated to some extent.

The clergy are not made up of men subject to an authoritative power, rigidly bound together and knowing no interests other than those of their order. They are divided into the black (regular) clergy, and the white (secular) clergy.² The black clergy are the Basilian monks, the only order in Russia. The white clergy, who carry out all the religious services and administer all the sacraments, are obliged to have a family. An unmarried man cannot be ordained priest. Hence the secular clergy are not outside society and the people, but are, on the other hand, held in bondage by all those material needs that press so heavily on a man who has a family to support. Moreover, all the wealth

¹ This report has to be made in all cases where the priest believes that the penitent has not abandoned his criminal intent.

² According to the return of the Procureur Général of the Holy Synod, in 1882, there were 566 convents, 10,709 monks and lay brothers, 18,748 nuns; total 29,457. *The Diocesan Gazette of Penza*, 1884, No. 21. The secular clergy and their families may be reckoned at about 570,000 souls ("Ianson's Statistics").

of the Church is concentrated in the hands of monks, who have charge, at the same time, of the high ecclesiastical offices. The monks alone can become archbishops. Thus all the dioceses are in their hands.

This clerical aristocracy treats the white clergy with the greatest contempt. In his own diocese, the archbishop is king and pope. His chancellor's court, the consistory, disposes of the life of the unhappy priest as absolutely as a lord disposes of the lives of his serfs. The one thing the priest has is his parish. This he receives from the consistory, and this he keeps as long as the consistory wills. As a consequence, the priest is ready to submit to any humiliation to keep in the good graces of his archbishop. Abuses and bribery hold sway in the consistory. And the priest, the slave whose fate and that of his children are in the hands of this black aristocracy, must suffer in silence.

In the old Russian Church, as we said, the parishioners themselves chose their priests. But this custom has long been abolished. The parish has no power even to defend its priest.¹

Formerly, congresses of the white clergy were held, where at least they could say what things they wanted. Now these congresses are suppressed. The priest is no better than the dumb slave of the monks.

Is it possible that in such conditions the priests can be remarkable for their civil and moral courage,

¹ Recently, the zemstvo of Moscow asked permission for the parishioners to point out which priests they wished to have in their parishes. The Government rejected this appeal.

can have any influence whatever on their parishioners? Of course, not. A man of intelligence and independence avoids the ecclesiastical profession. The clergy, always robbed by the consistory, always ready to be put upon, the first necessities of whose lives are never assured, in their turn grind their parishioners. This tax, in money or in kind, is at times simply revolting. Often a priest refuses to bury a corpse before he receives what he asks for. He holds out until the corpse begins to decompose, and the peasants are obliged to yield to his demands. Kindred abuses occur in relation to marriages.¹ Two years ago, the priest of the village of Svinaïa, not getting as much money as he asked from his parishioners, one day during mass set to work praying God to punish his village by plague and famine. The peasants, wroth, shut up the church and hid the keys. A popular saying has it, "that the eyes of the priest are envious, jealous, and his hands ready to seize everything he beholds."

To suppose that our clergy have a moral influence on the people is a considerable stretch of simplicity. Such influence as may be is yet further weakened by an ignominious system of denunciations, that are due to the scanty morality of the priests, and the constant necessity for them to try and please. Denunciations of every kind, on political, moral, religious grounds, became so many and so barefaced that even the dignitaries of the Church were obliged to take steps to lessen their frequency. This pettifogging, spying spirit destroyed completely the credit of the

¹ A marriage, to be legal in Russia, must be performed in a church.

clergy with the people.¹ The want of respect for the clergy was one of the most efficient causes of the raskol and of the sects.

I have already said that the raskol began as a protest against the reforms of the patriarch Nikon, nearly two hundred years ago. Amongst the aims of these reforms was that of centralizing the Church, of giving more importance to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, of getting the white clergy away from their dependence on the parish. And—a characteristic fact—the first leaders of the raskol came from the lower clergy.² This connection between the inferior clergy and the people is, at long intervals, noticeable in the subsequent events. For example, at the time of the peasant risings in the 18th and 19th centuries, the country clergy took a great part in the struggle, and ranged themselves on the side of the peasants, according to Romanovitch Slavatinsky.³ But such facts as these are becoming more and more rare. As the Church became a docile servant of the State, the clergy educated

¹ As a slight specimen of the many protests from the people, I will here quote the affair of the peasant Artemenko. He was condemned on May 25th, 1882, at Tchiguirine, for having insulted a priest. The latter denounced Artemenko on the ground that he had not presented himself to take the oath of allegiance to the new tsar. Artemenko, as people expected, was arrested and forced to take the oath. As soon as he was out of prison, he went to the church where the priest was preaching, and shouted out to him, "You're no shepherd; you're a venal, mercenary fellow." (*Golos*, July 14, 1882.)

² Out of thirty-eight earlier leaders of the schism ("Encyclopaedia," Kliouchnikov), twenty-five belonged to the clergy, and almost exclusively to the inferior clergy.

³ Romanovitch Slavatinsky : "The Russian Nobility," p. 363.

themselves down to the police level, and their moral value fell. This fact was continually pointed out by the schism, who quoted it as a proof that the Divine favour was turning from the official Church. The clergy could only answer by recourse to the support of the police.

The earlier times of the persecutions of the raskol were sullied by certain auto-da-fés, a crime almost unknown in Russia.¹ But if condemnations to the stake ceased after some years, persecutions of another kind went on, always set going by ecclesiastical dignitaries. Even at the present time the priests keep watch on the raskolniks, just like police officers. They say nothing if the raskolniks pay for silence; but if there is refusal to buy this, the priest, aided by the police, opens the campaign. Oratories are closed; old religious books taken away; chiefs of sects arrested. I have myself heard the complaints of the judges that the priests are a nuisance with their continual denunciations, their perpetual asking for warrants of search, arrests, and other reprisals—measures repellent to the conscience of every honest man to-day.²

Side by side with this moral enfeeblement of the clergy went the increase in number of the sectaries

¹ Some ecclesiastical voices were raised also in praise of the Spanish Inquisition; they found no echo. Fanaticism of this order is opposed to the Russian character.

² These facts are true of the time just before Alexander III. came to the throne. He granted the raskolniks a little more liberty. Still persecution went on. Thus in 1883, the Archbishop of Staroobriadtzi, Genadii, was exiled, for having the audacity to officiate in his oratory after it had been rebuilt. The raskolniks are not yet allowed to build a church without special permission.

and of the raskolniks. Now there are nearly 15,000,000 of them.

During the last twenty years, and especially at the time when Count Dmitri Tolstoi was Procureur Général of the Synod, the Government undertook a series of reforms, the aim of which was to improve the education of the clergy. In point of fact, the new seminaries did prepare a generation of priests much better educated than their predecessors. And at the same time a blow—perhaps the last—was struck at the moral influence of the clergy.

Formerly, one could come across a priest very ignorant, as superstitious as the people of his parish, just as stupid and timorous, but a good, simple man, at peace with the peasants, and in case of need capable of defending the *mir*. This type is growing rarer and more rare. The school of Count Tolstoi, whose basis was the system of passive discipline of the Jesuits, demanding much less of conviction than of the keeping up appearances, demoralized to the last degree the rising generation of our clergy. Formerly, the priests were at all events not atheists. The priests of the Tolstoi school do not trouble about believing in God. This new type of hypocritical bigots has for its sole aim the creation of a future for itself. An educated man, well-dressed, fond of comfort, the new kind of priest is to the peasants the keenest, the most insatiable, the most pitiless of plunderers.

Whilst the Tolstoi school were fashioning the new priestly type, all the living forces of the ecclesiastical youth were longing to desert the ranks of the clergy. They were hurrying into the universities. This

invasion of the universities by the seminarists was no stranger even to the development of what is called Nihilism. The seminarists, belonging to a class as debased as the peasant class, went out from that class with a hatred and disgust of the old order of things from end to end. Hating with all their hearts hypocrisy, they left the ecclesiastical calling, sometimes literally by force, and broke away from their families. Thus the clergy lost their most honest elements; some by desertion, others by perversion at the hands of the new school.

This moral degradation of the clergy corresponds in point of time with the greatest development of scientific thought in society. The educated class in Russian society has long been notable for its indifference to religion. You cannot say it detests religion. It is indifferent to religion. To be a religious person is not the thing. This opinion of Russian society as to religion is no new phase. But the number of educated persons has grown enormously the last twenty or thirty years. Instruction is no longer a privilege. Scientific ideas by a thousand different avenues are penetrating through the whole of Russia to its very heart of hearts—the people.

I have said before, that even among the populace there are new sects that approximate more and more closely to rationalism. Every day these sects are rejecting authority more and more, and giving in matters of faith the palm to the reason and conscience of man. What a time for the clergy to lose once for all the power of exercising over the people any moral influence! Actually then, we ought to

speak less than ever of clerical influence. Yet, at the present time, a certain fact may give it a little more strength. The emperor Alexander III., in his struggle with the revolutionists, is peering round him for all the conservative elements he can find, and is trying to gather them together.

With this end in view, the Government is giving the clergy its support.¹ What will be the result of this? This is the more difficult to say, as the emperor's policy is as changeable as the sky of St. Petersburg. One thing only can be said. In Russia *all* the clergy cannot be maintained. The black clergy may be, and then the white clergy will be of no importance, as they are now. Or the white clergy may be, but then they will aim at a revolution in the Church. To maintain the whole Church is impossible, because of the antagonism between the black and white clericals. Yet this latter is precisely the end aimed at by the policy of the emperor, and is the very thing that will make that policy fruitless.

¹ New convents are being built—thirty in three years, I think; ecclesiastical papers started; measures taken for restoring a chair of Christianity; ecclesiastical relief societies founded; the attempt made to get all primary education into the hands of the clergy, etc.

CHAPTER III.

The old princely aristocracy.—Our Russian nobility.—Its reinforcement from the *plebs*.—The tchin.—General effeteness of our nobility.—Ancient privileges and serfdom.—The horrors of serfdom.—Serf revolts.—The nobility's function as civilizer.—Introduction into Russia of the ideas of Western Europe.—The nobility and the ukase of emancipation.—What it ought to do, and what it does.—Liberal nobility.

THE part played by the nobility was much more noticeable, influenced the life of the people much more deeply.

I spoke above of the old princely aristocracy. It must not be imagined, however, that our nobility (*dvorianstvo*) takes origin from this. Truly in the Russian nobility there are a certain number of old families, of better birth than even the reigning house of the Romanovs.¹ But, as a rule, it has nothing in common, as to origin, with the old sovereigns of the country.

Even the etymology of the word “*dvorianstvo*” gives no notion of sovereignty or of high origin, like the words nobility, *noblesse*, *edel*. In old times, the

¹ In 1858, according to Prince Dolgorouky's statistics, out of all our nobility (600,000 people) only sixty-eight families were descended from the old sovereign princes. Romanovitch—Slavatinsky: “The Russian Nobility.”

servitors of the prince who were lodged and fed in his court (*dvor*) were called "dvorianié." Amongst these there were even slaves.

For so long a time was no idea of nobility, of distinction attached to the word "dvorianstvo," that in the 18th century, the eminent publicist Tatichtchev thought fit to allow the "dvorianié" who had retired from service to become serfs.¹

Our nobility takes historical origin from the "men of service" (*slouglié lioudi*) to whom the Muscovite tzars gave money and estates that they might be in a condition to perform military service.² These "slouglié lioudi" were made up in part of the descendants of the ancient prince's guard (*droujina*), of boyards, and of princes who had entered the service of Moscow. To a large extent, however, they were recruited from adventurers : among the Cossacks, Tartars, old brigands, were to be found all that were wanted. This mode of recruiting the "men of service" from the most plebeian class persisted later on, when the nobility were already beginning to form themselves into a dominant class. Thus the celebrated family of the Menchikovs has for ancestor a confectioner ; the first Count Razoumovsky was a singer ; Siverse, a lacquey. Peter I. took functionaries even from among the serfs (Varaksin, Ierchov, Nesterov). Count Iagouginsky was the son of the sexton of a Protestant church. Fouks went straight from the palace-kitchen, where

¹ Ditiatine: "On the History of Royal Ordinances as to Grants;" note 6, in *Russian Thought*, April, 1885.

² These were by preference military, but were also, in exceptional cases, civil functionaries.

he was *chef*, into the nobility. Zotov was lacquey to Prince Potiomkine and lover of Catherine II. before he was ennobled—and so on. The recruiting of the nobility from the ranks of the people lasted down to our own times, thanks chiefly to the custom that a certain grade (*tchin*) and certain decorations gave the title of noble.¹ This law was abolished only a year ago by Alexander III.

This service-class, whose members were, like the peasants, the slaves of the “great king,” seeing that it was made up of military men and rich people, was nevertheless of some importance in the State. That is why the tzars have for so long a time depended upon it. Thus the cunning favourite, Boris Godounov, in opening up a way to the throne and trying to rely upon the lesser nobility in order to subdue the boyards, effected the enslavement of the peasants to the soil.²

Little by little, the privileges of the “men of service” grew; they acquired more and more rights over the peasants.

Landed property (*pomiestié*), only given in exchange for service and resumed when this ended, began to become hereditary, even in the female line. Peter the Great ended by regarding it as the property of its owner, independently of any services he might have rendered. Only, the nobility that

¹ Finally, the grade of State-Councillor and the decoration of Vladimir carry with them hereditary nobility.

² At first, this enslavement did not annul the individual and civil rights of the peasants. All that was done was the taking away from them the right of changing their place of abode. The only object of this measure was to secure regularity in the revenues of the nobles.

Peter the Great for the first time organized into a class, were bound to perpetual service of the State, quite irrespective of landed property. Those who had no estates underwent the service like the rest. Besides, according to Peter, service is ranked more highly than origin. "The nobility of the chliakhta,"¹ he writes to the senate, "should be qualified by capacity." The list of grades² founded by Peter I. confirms to the grade of the "tchin" both nobility and precedence. Peter the Great decreed that every noble (to whatever family he belonged) should salute and give precedence to every officer. Later on, when external marks of distinction (rich dresses, the number of horses in their teams, etc.) were created for the nobles, all these marks were assigned to the "tchin," in such a way, *e.g.* that a princess descended from Rurik, but whose husband had not reached the grade of "tchin," might not wear velvet dresses, and if she wore silk ones, the material was not to cost two roubles a metre.³

Yet, compulsory service, however burdensome, assured the nobility of the first place in the State, and the more easily as the ease of access to this class caused a large number of able parvenus to enter it.

However one may estimate the results of Russian

¹ For some time a good name for the new class arising could not be found. Sometimes they were called in Polish tongue "chliakhta"; sometimes "dvorianié." By degrees, after fifty years, the latter name was definitely adopted.

² Said to have been drawn up from an idea of Leibnitz, of whom Peter I. took counsel. See Romanovitch-Slavatinsky: "The Russian Nobility."

³ See Romanovitch-Slavatinsky: "The Russian Nobility."

history in the 18th century, it is impossible not to admire the superabundant energy, the brilliant military and administrative talents, the force of character shown by Russia during this time. Thanks to the "list of grades," and the many revolutions of the palace, these talents swelled the noble class. They gave *éclat* and an appearance of stability to the idle and ignorant mass of the nobles properly so-called, the old men of service. The principle of desert had not then vanished; it constantly put impediments in the way of the principle of descent. The "dvorianstvo," a class created by service, could not transform itself into an administrative class. It intrigued for individual rights, sought after the recompenses and privileges of service, but understood nothing of the efforts the Government were making to turn it into a hard and fast ruling class. The Government had to force the "dvorianstvo" to take measures for the safe-guarding its prestige, its very existence. The Government decreed compulsory education for the nobles. So little did these understand their own interests, that they obstinately shunned education. The Government had to watch them like so many schoolboys.¹ The Government concerned itself in their education down to the most ridiculous detail. Peter the Great, *e.g.* gave out as

¹ The young nobles were compelled to come up for examination at Moscow or St. Petersburg, at seven years of age, at twelve, at sixteen, and at twenty. A noble who had not passed the last examination, was forced to join the navy as a common sailor, *without promotion*. By means of measures thus severe, the Government forced them to educate themselves. See Romanovitch-Slavatinsky: "The Russian Nobility," p. 126.

an ordinance to the nobles, that "they should not lie down in bed without first taking off their boots and shoes.¹

The nobility understood no better the other defensive measures of the Government. The latter founded the "majorat," to preserve the domains of the nobles from being broken up. So obstinate a resistance did the nobles make to this measure, that after some years it had to be withdrawn. Later on, the nobles treated just as badly the right of self-government the Government placed in their hands. Not only they did not hurry themselves to enjoy this right, but they looked upon it as a duty that was troublesome and even degrading. The emperors had to compel them by a series of decrees not to abstain from the elections and the fulfilment of duties that self-government necessitated.² These ukases were of little use. "The nobility," writes M. Ditiatine, "care nothing for the interests of the zemstvo or for their own interests as a body."

In the same way, the nobility have not been able to impose upon the people their economic rule. Generally speaking, the landed proprietors (*pomiechtchiks*) made profit out of their peasants in two ways; either they levied on them a tax (*obrok*), and then left them at liberty to carry on their exploitations as they would; or else they cultivated their estates themselves, and then the peasants were obliged to give free labour (*barchtchina*). The second system alone clearly was capable, if properly

¹ Romanovitch-Slavatinsky: "The Russian Nobility," p. 5.

² The ukase of 1802, the ordinance of 1827, the law of 1831, the ukase of 1848.

developed, of keeping the production of the peasants in the hands of the proprietors, and with that giving the latter the upper hand in economics. But so badly did the owners deal with their rural domains, that not only the system of gratuitous labour (barchtchina) did not grow—it fell into actual decay. By the end of the 18th century, 44 per cent. of all the peasant serfs were under the *régime* of the tax. About the middle of the 19th, their number, instead of having diminished, had risen to 49 per cent.¹ On the other hand, the peasants compelled to give free labour (barchtchinnié) did not lose their economic independence; they did not become mere labourers (batraks), but went on tilling their own fields by the side of their master's. Finally, the "dvorianstvo" remained always what it was at the outset, a class of service. It held all places in the administration, and yet, in spite of its enormous privileges, showed itself quite incapable of acquiring over the people a durable organic authority.

As to the privileges of the governing class, they were really unlimited. Empresses and emperors showed no signs of greed in this respect. The nobility received exclusive right to hold land, and exclusive right to own men. Peter III. abolished the compulsory service of the nobles. The empress, Catherine II., confirmed this decree and moreover gave up to them the local administration. Then it was that the Russian tzars began to call themselves "The First Gentlemen," an expression that was a

¹ Semevsky: "The Peasants under Catherine II.," pp. 48, 49. The figures quoted refer to thirteen governments. There are no statistics for the other governments.

mere parody borrowed from Europe, and without meaning in Russia. In order to give more splendour to the nobles, titles such as count and baron were also borrowed from Europe; decorations, coats of arms were invented. The history of the transformation of the "dvorianstvo" into a superior class often calls to mind a masquerade; e.g. in Russia they had no idea of what a coat of arms was. Many of the Russian nobles owe their rank, not to their merits and their "tchins," but to the Polish Jews who manufactured for them titles of nobility and heraldic quarterings.¹

The grants of the tzars to the nobles, grants of thousands and hundreds of thousands of peasants, are a fact of much more importance than these follies. It is not possible to give an exact account of these grants, but such details as the historian has managed to get, already give promise of enormous figures. Thus, for the period between Peter the Great and Paul, there is evidence in respect to 1,243,000 peasants (not counting women) given to the nobles, besides the totally illegal extension of serfdom over whole regions, in the Ukraine, etc.² With the like prodigality the imperial hands gave to the nobles gold from the State treasury. The empress, Catherine II., gave to her lovers and to those that took part in the *coup d'Etat* that placed her on the throne, at least 200 millions of roubles,

¹ At Berditchev and other towns there were places for the making of these. Often the titles of nobility went at a very low rate; 1 rouble.

² Karnovitch: "Large Fortunes in Russia." These documents only relate to a part of the grants.

reckoning them at the present-day value.¹ In their service, the nobles moreover received enormous sums, not as honorariums (these were not large) but as illegal payments (*dokhody*). Thus, *e.g.* at the beginning of this century, one regiment of cavalry brought in a yearly income of 100,000 roubles to its colonel.² It is not astonishing that the court and the service attracted the nobility. These were a cornucopia from which the emperors, for a whole century, rained down upon the nobility a stream of gold, in the hope that the favoured class would thus burgeon out fully and become at last an inex-pugnable stay "of king and country." At last, however, the emperors lost their illusions on this point. The natural laws of national development brought the nobility to decay by the very extension of their privileges.

The rights of the nobles over the peasants were modified in detail several times. During a certain period, the nobles had the power of condemning their peasants to hard labour for such time as seemed good to them. Later, this right was taken from them; the Government, in fact, abandoned the peasants bodily to the despotism of the nobles, and these last committed terrible abuses.

In the time of Alexander I., who called himself a republican, the following comi-tragedy took place at St. Petersburg.

The Countess Saltykov had the misfortune to become bald. To hide this failing she wore a wig.

¹ 48,520,500 roubles then. All these figures only represent an insignificant part of the actual gifts.

² Karnovitch: "Large Fortunes in Russia."

She shuddered at the thought that her secret might be discovered. To prevent discovery she hit upon the device of placing in her bedroom a cage, in which she shut up her hairdresser, and from which she never let him go out. The miserable man passed three years in this cell. He grew old and bent, terrible to see. At length he managed to break his cage and escape. The countess is in despair. The secret of her baldness hangs on a thread. Overwhelmed by her misfortune, she seeks out the emperor, tells him all about it, and begs him to give orders for the hairdresser to be recovered at all costs. Alexander has inquiries made, and receives from the police a report as to the terrible life of the hairdresser. Then the emperor, the well-beloved emperor, as they call him, gives orders not to search for the hairdresser, and to make to the countess, "in order to calm her," an official report that the corpse of her serf has been found in the Neva.¹ That is the way in which nobles and tzars treat the people.

Many cases have been proved in which proprietors plied a regular trade in young peasant girls, whom they sold to brothels. Gangs of serfs were taken like so many slaves to the southern markets, where Armenian merchants bought them for the purpose of exportation to Turkey. As to the harems of the masters—it is superfluous to speak of them here. We need only remind the reader that their generous Slav hospitality prompts them to place these harems at the disposal of their friends.

There is not an abomination of infamy of which

¹ Semevsky: "The Peasants under Catherine II."

the nobility has not been guilty under the *régime* of serfdom. The punishments inflicted on the serfs in many cases surpass all the horrors recounted by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. The Princess Kozlovsky ordered her lacqueys to be stripped naked and tied to a post, and then a pack of dogs let loose upon them; or even compelled young girls to whip with rods the unfortunate thus strung up. Sometimes, beside herself with passion, she would seize the rod and beat the miserable man on his genital organs. A certain gentleman ordered the soles of the feet of one of his servitors to be burnt, to punish him for drowning two small dogs his wife had been ordered to suckle.¹

I will spend no more time on these abominations, that cover the Russian name with shame. I will confine myself to saying, at all of these abuses the gorge of the people rises the more, as the nobles are not the conquerors of the country, and have not sufficient strength to hold it in bondage. Their cruelties were not frightful, nor did they cause alarm; they seemed simply hideous, for they had not even as excuse the right of the strongest.

The burning hate of the people is then easily comprehensible.

Even now, twenty-five years after the abolition of serfdom, the peasants speak with indignation of the times when "the nobles exchanged men for dogs;" even now the peasants are ready for any violence against the nobles. When serfdom prevailed, assas-

¹ The reader will find a large number of these horrible facts in the works of those that treat of the history of serfdom. Those just quoted are taken from the historian, Semevsky.

sinations of the proprietors and of their stewards were almost habitual. In the last twenty years of the reign of Nicolas I. 268 cases of this kind are on record, and this official number is far below the truth. Risings of the whole of a village, or the whole of a volost, were yet more common. In the same twenty years, Semevsky estimates the number of these peasant outbreaks at four hundred and twenty.¹

The violence of the people in their défence against the excesses of the nobles was the only check on the despotism of the masters. Especially in the last years of serfdom, these outbursts took on an extremely cruel character, and were accompanied by mutilation of stewards, assassinations of proprietors, all kinds of excesses. And the Emperor Alexander II. was perfectly right, when he said to the nobility of Moscow, in 1856 : "It will be better to abolish serfdom by a measure coming from above, than to wait for the time when it will abolish itself from below."²

Thus the privileges granted the nobility, far from helping to consolidate their authority over the people, rendered this authority, on the contrary, wholly impossible.

The spread of education struck a new blow at the nobility. The number of educated men capable of serving the State increased ; and the nobility, even as a service-class, lost their last *raison d'être*.

Besides, with the spread of education, there appeared, in a nobility composed of parvenus, an ever-

¹ Semevsky : "The Peasants under Catherine II.," p. 375.

² Ivanioukov : "The Downfall of Serfdom," p. 8.

growing number of individuals who, in the name of the people's interests, cursed alike the nobility and the tzars, their creators and maintainers. The number of revolutionaries and democrats from the noble class is veritably astonishing. What is called the plot of the Decembrists (1825), recruited its adherents almost exclusively from the nobles, and further, had as its aim the abolition of serfdom quite as much as the promulgation of a constitution. The general state of the country outweighed the interests of a class. The nobles could not but see that the physical, like the moral forces of Russia, were in the people.

The most able defenders of the nobility have times and again sung the praises of this class as the civilizers of Russia. Our great poet, Pouchkine, took up this theme, and the fact cannot be denied by the student of Russian history.

Side by side with a crowd of ignorant and coarse do-nothings, the nobility produces not a few rich and intelligent protectors of civilization. Thanks to these, a considerable number of talented men have been brought to light. Thus Chevtchenko, the celebrated poet of the Ukraine, was rescued from slavery through the efforts of Joukovsky and his friends. Young plebeians found asylum and protection in the house of many a noble Mæcenas. Fashion would have it thus. There was an enormous inrush of ideas from Europe into Russia, thanks to the foreign teachers whom the nobility bade thither in large numbers. It is undeniable that in this respect the Russian nobility showed plenty of tolerance. Pouchkine had a brother of

Marat among his teachers. In Hertzen's "Memoirs," we can still read an old French Jacobin's reply to his pupil, who asked him why Louis XVI. was guillotined: "Because he was a traitor to his country." This influence of immigrants, for the most part French, was only made possible by the wealth of the nobles. These noble Mæcenates sometimes even founded institutions that spread the light; the Lyceum of Demidov, the Lyceum of Kouchelev-Bezborodko, the Roumiantsev Library (the best in Russia next to the public library of St. Petersburg), and others. All this was, perhaps, but a very poor compensation for the evil that the nobility did. Nevertheless, the facts are undeniable.

The civilizing work of the nobility was, however, in such contradiction to its social function, that it told fatally against this class itself. Thought, once aroused, could not deceive itself as to the ineptitude, the perfect illegality, and the want of solidity of the *régime* of the nobility.

That is why neither the people of Russia nor the civilized world generally believed that the nobles' power would last.

At the very time when the tzars were beginning to load them with privileges (1724), the great publicist, Possochkov, wrote: "The proprietors, if they own the peasants for a time, will not be for ever their masters." "What are our nobility?" asked Count Stroganov, in 1801. "The class most ignorant, most insignificant, and most stupid." In order to induce Alexander I. to emancipate the serfs, without fearing the resistance of the nobles, the count adds: "Neither law nor equity can awake

in them (the nobles) the idea of the feeblest resistance. . . . The nobility often cheat when they are in the service, but . . . all Government measures that tended* to encroach on their own rights were always carried out with an astonishing punctuality."¹

This prophecy was fulfilled completely in 1861.

The nobility broke in pieces in the twinkling of an eye. This seems wonderful ; but it is easily explicable ; they had nothing to support them. The people hated them, and only submitted to their influence just as they would to the police. The educated classes hated serfdom, because they ascribed to it the absence of individual rights in Russia. Finally, the industrial classes were the foes of the nobility, because they checked the development of the productive forces of the country. This last circumstance had, perhaps, the greatest importance in the eyes of the Government.

The Crimean war had shown how weak Russia was. And how could productive forces develop, if slavery held in chains the work of nearly half the population ? The government abandoned its faithful nobility. The tzar's sympathy began to lean in the other direction. "The first gentleman" made ready to become "the first speculator." And then the nobility broke up without resistance. In this also they showed themselves "cheats in service." They made use of every trick, every deception, to get as much money as possible for themselves, and to pare down as much as they could the holdings of the peasants. But they did not resist, and without any doubt they were wise in not committing that folly.

¹ Romanovitch-Slavatinsky : "The Russian Nobility."

To tell truth, the Government of Alexander II. was far from abandoning them entirely. In 1861, the imperial policy entered upon a new era. The Government began protecting the capitalists, as in the preceding century it had protected the nobility. Now, in taking away from the nobility all political influence over the people, the Government gave the nobility every means of acquiring an economic influence.

The peasants received, as a rule, a very insufficient amount of land. Under serfdom, they had at their disposal nearly 35 million déciatines; the emancipation only allotted them 22 millions. Thus the peasants were compelled to rent of the owners at least 42 to 43 per cent. of the land they needed.¹

Moreover, the holdings were so arranged that those of the masters interfered with the peasant in the working of his plot. They surrounded his lands as with a rigid circle, so that, in order to avoid the fines for damage done by his cattle to the fields of the proprietors, the peasant had to live in a state of subjection to them.

Then, the emancipation itself gave the proprietors enormous sums that they were able to apply to the working of their estates. On the average, the peasants did not pay for their holdings less than 39 roubles a déciatine, an exorbitant price.² More-

¹ Even these figures give a more favourable idea as to the condition of the peasants than the truth.

² *Compte rendu* of the position of the ransoming of estates up to January 1, 1885. *The Russian Gazette* for 1885, No. 17. In the western provinces, in which the Government is trying to paralyse the influence of Poland, the price of the déciatine is about one-third of this.

over, in the fertile provinces, where the produce of the land was sufficient for the payment of the taxes, the peasants received an altogether insufficient amount of land. On the other hand, in the barren provinces, where the peasants derived the greater part of their income from different local industries, much land was given them and at a price higher than the produce this land was capable of yielding. In this way, the very industry of the peasants was indirectly taxed in favour of the proprietors.

Scarcely any forest land was allotted to the peasants; in like manner, they had few meadows. To sum up, thanks to various devices, they are placed everywhere in dependence upon the proprietors.

The statutes of the zemstvo institutions, on which depends all the administration of the rural economy of the provinces and of the governments, are also so drawn up as invariably to assure the nobles having the upper hand. The total number of representatives of the zemstvo (*glasny*) is so arranged that the nobles furnish 6,309, the peasants 5,725, the inhabitants of the towns 1,791.

Besides their privileged position, the nobility had the advantage, as I just said, of receiving as price of the land given to the peasants nearly 500 million roubles in cash, and the remittance of the sums they owed to the State, for which their estates had been mortgaged, amounting to more than 300 million roubles.

Thus they held in their hands all the means for gaining the upper hand of the peasants economically. But they did not know how to take advantage of them.

The old service-class had not strength to turn itself into an "industrial class." The enormous sums of money received from the peasants were squandered in feasts and excesses of every kind at St. Petersburg, Moscow, and abroad. The cultivation of their estates, instead of being bettered, was everywhere abandoned. Little by little the nobles found themselves in want of money to keep up their ostentatious show. As they did not know how to work, they sold their estates in all directions. These sales were carried out on a grand scale. In the government of Moscow, the nobles lost in this way in twenty years (1865-1885) 433,000 déciatines of territory; (if things do not change, say the Statistical Committee, about the year 1913 there will not be in the government of Moscow any lands belonging to the nobility);¹ in the government of St. Petersburg, from 1867 to 1876, 280,166;² the peasants alone bought in that of Tver, from 1861 to 1883, more than 612,985 déciatines;³ in that of Poltava, from 1864 to 1881, the nobles lost 25 per cent. of their estates;⁴ in the government of Saratov, the nobles' losses were estimated at a million déciatines,⁵ and so on.

Step by step with these losses, the complete ruin of the nobility came about. By degrees they disappeared from social life. The "raznotchiniets" (yeomen), who had already played for some time

¹ "Statistics of the Zemstvo of Moscow," the most recent valuation of private property.

² Ianson: "Statistics," p. 176.

³ *The Russian Gazette*, 1884, No. 181.

⁴ "Outline of the Changes in Landed Property in the Government of Poltava."

⁵ *The Russian Gazette*, 1884, No. 345.

past an important part, now enter into all callings ; science, art, literature, administrative offices. The nobility—strange fact!—appears even to fall off in numbers. At all events, in 1858 the hereditary nobles were 609,973 in number, and in 1870 they had fallen to 544,188.¹

All of the nobility that are in the least degree educated give up of their own accord the memory of their past. A new type is appearing, that the newspapers call “the repentant noble”—a most accurate name. These are the nobles that are trying to atone for the faults of their class by becoming good sons of the fatherland. These men are a generation of energetic preachers of man’s moral perfectability, like the celebrated publicist, D. I. Pisarev. A large number of these repentant nobles tried to become one with the people. They joined the ranks of the revolutionists and of the socialists.²

Another part of the nobility sank down into the “tchinovnitchestvo” (official class) and the commercial class ; banks, railway offices are full of ruined nobles. Terrible dramas, subject “The ruin of the nobility,” are enacted again and again at the bar of the law-courts. In the trial of the court-valets (an association of swindlers and sharpers), appeared young nobles of old family and elegant manners in quite ordinary dress. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Although statistics make a distinct category of this fallen aristocracy, it is really mixed up with

¹ Ianson : “Statistics,” vol. i. p. 82.

² In the whole number of those accused of political crimes, not less than 15 per cent. are nobles (see *The Will of the People*, No. 5). This estimate is without doubt lower than the truth.

men of the liberal professions and with the proletariat. Yet, a certain fragment of the richer nobility, brought up with more reasonable ideas, holds its own in the midst of this catastrophe. Although half-bereft of their estates they have not come wholly to grief. They have set to work to cultivate their domains in conformity with the new social condition, and now form an important part of the zemstvo. The best of these nobles have given up all the pretensions of their class. They form merely an educated class of landed proprietors, often ardent defenders of the people's interests, especially in opposition to the village *bourgeoisie*. For the most part, they are moderate men, of liberal leanings, advocates of the development of local autonomy, of the permanency of the tribunals, the liberty of the press, the guarantees of citizen-rights and, to sum up all, of the constitution. These men, though very few in number, form the most educated and intelligent section of all the zemstvos. As a consequence, they have a certain influence, so that as a rule the zemstvo has become the synonym for that which is liberal. The zemstvo gives to the liberals the same support as the men of the liberal professions and the proletariat give to the revolutionaries. It is self-evident that this liberal section of the zemstvo, noble in origin, has nothing in common with the nobility. The liberal zemstvo has most at heart the oblivion by the people of the epoch of the aristocratic tyranny; it aims at founding provincial autonomy on principles exempt from all caste-feeling. There is even a difficulty in the calling its members "gentlemen."

The real traditions of the nobility, the longing to revive its old prestige, are only maintained in the extreme reactionary party, very small in number, and with Prince Mechtchersky, the well-known *publicist*; for spokesman.¹ These are men who have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing; who have retained the greedy appetites of their fathers, but lost the possibility of gratifying them. For a long time they were crouching in their holes, raging at all reform; they lay there unseen until the reign of Alexander III. Called to life again now by the tzar's favour, they have spoken. These madmen of reaction can rarely write Russian, and show an ignorance scarcely ever found now-a-days in the world of politics. They dream of bringing Russia back to the old order of things. There is nothing in this new Russia, the annulling of which is not demanded by them. Suppression of women's education, abolition of trial by jury, absolute authority of governors, destruction of the zemstvo—these are some of the things they ask for at present. The zemstvo in particular they hate. "It is the gangrene of Russian life," cries one of the madmen in *The Citizen*. Prince Mechtchersky places as the chief article in his programme: that the authority of the zemstvo be divided amongst the individual responsible functionaries, or that the zemstvo be turned into an assembly of nobles with some representation of the peasants.² The same anathemas are launched at the land-bank of the peasants, and the like.

¹ He publishes the *Grajdanine* (*The Citizen*), and is also known as the author of some poor novels.

² *The Citizen*, 1885, No. 39.

Such is the moribund delirium of these Last of the Mohicans^s of the noble order. It needs no demonstration that a party with a programme of this nature is doomed.

CHAPTER IV.

The *bourgeoisie*.—*Bourgeoisie* of the towns.—Our capitalism.—No third estate in Russia.—Primitive accumulation.—Frauds and thefts the source of fortunes.—Business jobbers.—The village *bourgeoisie*: koulaks and miroïeds.

THE capitalist class, into whose ranks, as I said, part of the nobility is passing, demands much more of our attention. Serfdom was very injurious to the development of the productive forces of Russia, and this development was therefore slow. In 1855, a man who knew his Russia as well as Kochelev, said that the incomes of the gentlemen and those of the business men were equal. The abolition of serfdom and the government policy that followed on this, opened out wide horizons to the activity of capitalists, and gave to these gentry thousands of millions of roubles in the shape of subsidies.

The industrial class increased with incredible rapidity. Towns grew under your very eye. The inhabitants of towns (business men, miechtchané, artisans and so on) who in 1858 formed 7·25 per cent. of the whole population of Russia, had risen in 1870 to 9·2 per cent. of the population.¹ The capital of joint-stock companies was in 1855 only

¹ Ianson : vol. i. p. 82.

228 million francs.¹ In 1879 it had already risen to 6,000 million francs.² The number of persons concerned in industry and commerce increased. In 1867, the number of licences and authorizations of all kinds connected with commerce was 578,464;³ in 1874, it had already risen to 980,137.⁴ Besides the enormous capital in specie concentrated in the hands of the commercial and industrial class, a large amount of land property began to come into its hands. Most of the estates sold by the gentlefolk became the property of merchants, instead of that of peasants. Thus, from 1867 to 1876, in the government of St. Petersburg alone, 122,000 déciatines were acquired by persons belonging to different classes in the towns.⁵ In the government of Moscow, more than 120,000 déciatines were sold to merchants between 1865 and 1877.⁶ This transfer of estates to the hands of the industrial class went on even in provinces, like e.g. that of Poltava, in which industry was least prevalent. In Poltava, within eight years, 40,000 déciatines were bought by merchants, mietchchanié, and Jews.⁷

The preponderance of the industrial class is becoming more marked. It shows itself in the most

¹ Annual Report of the Minister of Finances, 1878. Rate of exchange, 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ centimes per rouble.

² Almanack, M. Souvorine, 1881. Rate of exchange, 254 $\frac{3}{4}$ centimes per rouble.

³ Summary of Statistics in 1874.

⁴ Ianson : "Statistics," vol. i. p. 108.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 176.

⁶ "Statistical Summary of Moscow," part i. p. 37.

⁷ "Outline of the Landed Property Movement in the Government of Poltava, 1881."

diverse forms. The schools are full of children of the bourgeois class. A large number of journals could be named wholly in the hands of industrial companies—a thing common enough in Europe, but quite unknown in Russia up to the present time. At times the wealthy bourgeois even play the part of Mæcenas, formerly enacted by the nobility alone. Thus, at Moscow, *e.g.*, a well-known Russian theatre, whose actors are of the best, such as Pissarev, Andréiev Bourlak, etc., is the creation of a rich manufacturer and capitalist, Malkiel.

Already the idea of acquiring the right to a certain amount of representation in the government of the State is everywhere dawning upon the industrial class. A year ago, the merchants of Nijni-Novgorod,¹ took steps with a view to getting a special council appointed that was to be connected with the ministry of finance, and composed of representatives of commerce and industry. The question was broached by Professor Mendeilesev and Chneider in the work "Commercial and Industrial Chambers." This work was forbidden, and generally speaking the Government shows no desire to satisfy this leaning of the capitalist class. But it lends a willing ear to such requests as are of a private character and have reference to certain things the capitalists want, and it takes trouble to grant them.

A large number of measures taken by the Government might be pointed out that were due to these requests with which our capitalists bombard the powers that be unceasingly. The tax on salt was

¹ At Nijni-Novgorod is held the most important fair in Russia, a commercial business involving 400 million francs.

abolished in this way. As result of the same action, the customs duties between Russia and Finland were recently raised, a transit *via* Transcaucasia forbidden, importation duties raised again and again etc. Among the most cowardly concessions¹ of the Government may be noted the modification of the law as to the labour of children in factories. At first, the intention was to forbid night labour for children entirely; but, thanks to the action of the manufacturers, this is permitted in many cases.¹

In short, the commercial and industrial class has during the last thirty years acquired a very marked influence in the social life of Russia, and the question of "capitalism" is now one of the most vital interest to Russian writers.

Will the commercial and industrial class become at last the dominant class in Russia? Will it take definitely into its hands the labour of the people and national production?

This question has given rise to an important polemic in Russia, in which the men that know Russian life best are ranged on opposite sides. The picturing types of the *bourgeoisie* engages the attention of our novelists and best writers. The capitalist is to a certain extent the hero of contemporary Russian life. Yet, in spite of this appearance of strength and growth, it is impossible not to notice one fact extremely characteristic as to the situation of the capitalist class.

In France, e.g., the industrial class, the third estate, came on the scene invested with a genuine

¹ Just at the present time, night labour for women and children is again forbidden. (*Moscow Gazette*, June 9-21, 1885.)

popularity, full of faith in its own strength. The third estate was everything ; it was the nation. The most notable minds of the age were on its side. Its principles seemed to open up a new era in the life of humanity. The most extreme revolutionaries, such as Camille Desmoulins, defended with equal ardour the liberty of the individual and the sacred rights of property. The most advanced philosophers, like Saint Simon, took as their social ideal a State in which authority should be in the hands of learned men and industrial workers. The third estate, in working for its own interests, served at the same time humanity as a whole.

To how small an extent is this a portrait of our nascent industrial class !

From its dawn almost the most notable minds of Russian society oppose the interests of the mass of the labouring population to those of the industrial class. Tchernychevsky, the most popular of Russian writers, and moreover the only Russian economist of note, is an adept in socialist doctrines. His friend Dobrolioubov, the most eminent Russian critic, lays bare in his celebrated “Tiomnoié Tzarstvo” (“Reign of Obscurantism”) the corruption and gross ignorance of the *bourgeoisie*. In a series of articles he contrasts with them the working people, full of strength and life. The best writers, the most eminent observers of the life of the people, constantly insist upon the necessity of maintaining the rural commune, of encouraging and developing the local branches of industry that are in the hands of the producers and not of the capitalists—measures in direct contradiction to the interests of the *bourgeoisie*.

And these measures are approved even by the *savants* that believe the temporary domination of capital in Russia inevitable, such as Kabloukov, Issaïev.

As to those who do not regard this domination as inevitable, like the profound observer of Russia who signs his writings with the initials V. V.,¹ as a matter of course they approve so much the more measures of this kind. The most eminent professors of political economy, such as M.M. Postnikov and Ivanioukov, are constantly demonstrating the necessity of preserving the rural commune. An almost conservative writer, of great learning, Prince Vassiltchikov, whilst he thinks large landed property indispensable to a certain extent, advises the maintenance of the rural commune of the peasants. But the names and quotations would fill whole pages, if I tried to mention all the writers and all the scientific men in Russia who, under this circumstance or that, range themselves on the side of the people against the industrial class. All the best of them behave towards the capitalist as towards a temporary and inevitable evil. And, notable thing, even among the millionaire capitalists there is no difficulty in meeting with individuals who call themselves socialists, and declare they are not opposed to the socialist *régime*. I do not pause to inquire into the sincerity of these statements; but it is evident that people who talk thus cannot be convinced of the utility of the *régime* they have created. As a rule, the people

¹ The real name of this able writer is known throughout Russia, but he persists in concealing himself under these initials. I take great care not to betray the secret of this comedy.

utterly ignorant or extreme reactionaries only, such as M. Katkov, M. Tsitovitch, etc., range themselves unreservedly on the side of the *bourgeoisie*. This industrial class, which triumphs in France, thanks to the revolution, is in Russia allied to the most violent reaction. The *bourgeoisie*, which in France appeared as the presage of a new *régime*, the only just and eternal one, seems in Russia to be a temporary and inevitable evil.

There is in economic science an expression, "primitive accumulation," applied to that moment in economic life when wealth comes less as the result of production than as that of more or less open robbery. The Russian industrial class, it cannot be denied, is actually in this phase of primitive accumulation.

The want of honesty of our industrial and business men has become a proverb. Fraudulent bankruptcy is so common in Russia, that an ordinary failure appears almost incredible. When some one goes bankrupt, the first question asked is—how much bronze is there? That there is bronze¹ no one doubts.

Among the most important sources of large fortunes, especially in the south, were forged paper-money and smuggling. A more frequent method is the most shameless robbery of the treasures of the State and of those of public institutions. I doubt much whether anywhere else than in Russia are there such impudent thefts on public institutions. The banks and the various financial societies have

¹ The technical word for fictitious letters of exchange given by the fraudulent bankrupt to his friends.

acquired quite a celebrity in this connection. The director of the bank of the town of Skopine has enriched himself by robberies of this kind to the extent of more than ten millions. Not long ago, the bankruptcy of the Orel bank was accompanied by the same abuses ; and at the present moment the town, as result of its failure, is obliged to sell the very bridges over the river Oka that runs through Orel.

Of course our industrial capitalists are even less sparing of the treasury. Many of the largest fortunes in Russia have been derived from State contracts. The jobbery of the contractors in the late war is beyond belief. The victuals paid for by the Russian army was even taken into the Turkish lines. A number of contractors were summoned before the courts.

"The idiots ! They only get what they deserve," said one of the best-known peculators on this occasion ; "they want to do business and don't know how. They won't get me up before the courts."—"And what's the proper thing to be done, so as not to be had up ?"—"Have partners whom they dare not summon before the courts."¹ It was said that this shrewd business man took the precaution of having as partners members of the imperial family.

Another source of fortune was found in railroads and all kinds of speculations, or so-called industrial enterprises. Golovatchev, one of those that have studied most closely our railway enterprises, estimates at more than 600,000 million francs the sums

¹ In the absence of legal documents, I will not give here the name of this person, whom everybody knows at Moscow ; but I pledge my word as to the accuracy of the conversation.

expended by the treasury in making railroads.¹ In what a productive way these sums were spent, an idea may be formed from the case of the railway from Moscow to Riazan. According to Golovatchev, the construction of this railway cost 7,700,000 roubles, and the Government guaranteed an income on a capital of fourteen millions. Hundreds of millions remained thus in the pockets of the capitalists, without the least work, the least production.

In like fashion the gold of the treasury is poured out in numberless industrial enterprises of all kinds. Many of them only exist, it would seem, as a pretext for subsidies from the treasury. Take, as example, the Neva factory, belonging to the Russian Society of Mechanic Factories. In 1876 this owed the treasury a sum greater than its own value; but this did not prevent the Government from advancing it 1,650,000 more roubles. In 1881, in order to give fresh encouragement to this society, the Government bought a certain number of locomotives for two million roubles, although they were not wanted. In addition, the Government gave the society the right to borrow money from the State bank, on the security of its locomotives, at the rate of 30,000 roubles each. The society made much use of this privilege by making, solely for the purpose of pawning them, locomotives of inferior quality and quite useless, received 30,000 roubles for each of them, and then sent them into dépôts where they ended by losing what little value they had. In 1884, the factory owed the treasury 4,700,000 roubles. These it did not pay, but on the contrary received from the

¹ Golovatchev: "History of Railroads in Russia," pp. 1 and 2.

Government a new order, to the extent of 2,150,000 roubles, although on this occasion also the Government had no need of locomotives.

Of course, concessions, guarantees, subsidies, are not obtained for nothing. . . .

The story is told of Alexander II., that one day he said to the heir apparent (the present emperor) : “ It seems to me that in Russia there are only two persons who do not steal—you and I.”

I do not know how far the statement was true ; but in any case, the Emperor Alexander II. made no opposition to these thefts. He said in his easy way, “ Every one must live ” : and on this principle, he let our administrative affairs get into a state of depravity unheard of until his time.

See, *e.g.*, what Kochelev writes ; one of those rare Russians who, whilst they preserve unimpaired their honour and their probity, are still able to be monarchists. “ Peculation, tips, illegal frauds, etc., have reached their maximum at St. Petersburg. . . . Most of those in high places have mistresses, who take greedily the money offered them, and then give despotic orders to their lovers. . . . The immorality, impudence, and ineptitude of the higher administration surpass all the cheating and all the blunders of our provincial employés.” To speak plainly, these are the instruments of labour of the most productive branch of Russian industry, by aid of which the money of the people runs straight from the treasury into the pockets of the jobbers.

In a word, the type of an industrial capitalist is in the eyes of Russian society merely that of an adroit cheat and intriguer. I do not mean to say

there are not honest people among them. I am speaking of the preponderating type that gives tone and colour to the class, of those who specially fulfil the mission of primitive accumulation.

The bourgeois type, sprung from the environment of the village, is still less sympathetic. I have already said that the Russian peasants are so penetrated with the sentiment of sociability, so impregnated with the tendency to live conformably to the truth, after the commandments of God, that it is difficult to find their equals from this point of view. But the legislation of Alexander II. placed them in such a situation that to live according to the truth, after the commandments of God, became a purely heroic conception.

The emancipation of the peasants was, as I have said, accompanied by the lessening of the amount of land they held and the increase of the amount of taxes they paid. Terribly in need of money, the peasant naturally fell into the hands of the "koulaks," "miroïdès" (usurers). On the other hand, when the authority of the gentlemen proprietors was abolished, that of the administration in the country districts became unlimited. This authority does everywhere in support of the koulaks and the miroïdès what the higher administration does for the big jobbers. Thus a wide field of action opens out before the koulak and the miroïdè.

And what temptations there are for the peasant to become a miroïdè! If he has not enough money, his life is really terrible. If his taxes are in arrears, he is whipped; if he has no money to give for tips, he is the victim of any number of persecutions

at the hands of the "pissar," the "ouriadnik," the "stanovoï," and the other innumerable village authorities. Money is the one *habeas corpus*; so money must be had.

Honourable labour is not enough to get it. The peasant's work is under too disadvantageous conditions; in many cases, it cannot even find him in food. The one easy means of getting rich is to rob openly the living and the dead; *i.e.*, usury in every form, or cheating. Thus, among the more intelligent and energetic peasants, a larger and larger number become miroïëds. At times peasants made immense fortunes in this way. In the newspapers, now and again, peasants that own 100,000 déciatines of land are mentioned. Very often these enriched *parvenus* become business men, and deal with millions. Of course, the bulk of them never reach this position. They remain merely village intriguers, pot-house usurers. These are just the people that make the most exacting exploiters. They have undergone all the atrocious misery and humiliation; and they show the most terrible ferocity, and drain the peasants like leeches. Affecting to despise the very labour that they have been wont to regard as the only honourable means of livelihood in the depth of their conscience, these gentry have lost all self-respect. With a cruel pleasure, they inflict on the peasants who fall into their hands every degradation. When the peasant, in the name of his family, racked with hunger, prays the koulak to give him time; when he drags himself to his feet and receives his kick of contempt without a word, the miroïëd

seems, forgetful of all pity, to revel in his power. Sometimes, one of these koulaks, who has left the *mir*, is so brutal that he feels no pity whatever. Gradually he becomes a mere bird of prey, never thinks of justice, and says once for all that "it's the way of the world." "The peasant is a fool; he must be taught," says he coolly. None the less, it is beyond doubt that a large number of these gentry, who pillage without remorse, only do thus because otherwise they could not live. Eat up others, or you will be eaten up yourself. Face to face with such an alternative, not many men pause long.

Thus, to sum up: the Russian industrial class is, so far, a heterogeneous mass that has never had a clear social idea or any class tendency. Its members do not know themselves whither they are drifting, at what they ought to aim. It is clear that so long as they remain thus, they cannot become a dominant class. How long will the industrial class remain in this condition? Only the future can say. Certain anticipations may be formed on this question when we have examined more closely the condition of Russian industry, *i.e.*, the environment whose development in this direction or in that will of necessity determine the future of our *bourgeoisie*.

BOOK V.

ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL
RUSSIA.

BOOK V.

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CHAPTER I.

Natural riches of Russia.—Its poverty from the point of view of effective products.—Total yearly production.—Revenue per head.—State expenses.—Rapid growth of the population out of proportion to the increase in the national revenue.—Russian agriculture and industry, their backward position.

RUSSIA has the reputation of being a rich country ; and the reputation is not without foundation if the natural resources of the country only are in question. All the southern part contains enormous areas (nearly 90 million déciatines) of black loam ; further, the climate is favourable to the growth of wheat. The cold winter in Russia does not allow of the growth of as many crops from one and the same field as in England. *e.g.* ; on the other hand, the warmth of the summer makes agriculture possible even in the regions hard by the polar circle. The dryness of the Russian climate may seem unfavourable to the cultivation of grass ; but the enormous masses of snow that accumulate during the winter are a kind of savings-bank of moisture. Hence there is an exuberant herbage, that, thanks to the summer heats, yields hay of the best quality.

The northern part of Russia has all the conditions favourable to the growth of magnificent

woods, whose lignine has rare virtues. The forests of Russia (not reckoning Siberia) occupy an area of more than 130 million déciatines, and are alone an immense source of wealth.

Owing to these immense forests, hunting is among us, even at the present time, a productive industry. Fishing is everywhere carried on upon a large scale. Our rivers and seas swarm with fish; and on the shores of the Arctic Ocean they hunt the whale, the walrus, and the seal. There are seals also in the Caspian Sea.

Russia has within its borders the most different kinds of metallurgic products: gold, silver, platinum, iron, copper, precious stones, naphtha, and so on. In Siberia there are auriferous sands, among the richest in the world. In the Oural, iron occurs in gigantic masses. In Central Russia, and in its outlying parts, in the Oural, on the Don, etc., enormous beds of coal are found. Amongst other valuable mineral products may be named phosphorite, to the efflorescence of which Southern Russia in great measure owes its fertility. This beautiful mineral, which contains from 16 to 27 per cent. of phosphoric acid, occurs in huge quantities in some ten of the provinces. In some places it is so abundant that they use it for paving stones; the town of Koursk is entirely paved with this valuable mineral.

Thus, in a certain sense, Russia may perhaps be called a rich country. But if we take account of the effective quantity of the products that the Russian population is able to get out of the soil, we shall see that it is in reality a very poor country. It is true that in Russia it is more easy to get a morsel

of bread than elsewhere; but for the majority of the people this morsel of bread is so small that it is not even always enough for half the necessities of life. The cause of this lies as much in the backward civilization of Russia as in the various vices of its political organization, which prevent the people from putting into action all their productive forces.

Russian statistics are, unfortunately, not sufficiently developed for us to be able to give a precise estimate of the national revenue. However, the total annual production in Russia (not reckoning Finland, Poland, Southern Caucasus, and Central Asia) is about 3,740 million roubles.¹ This sum is made up as follows :—

	Roubles.
1. Value of agricultural produce (deducting that of the seeds)	2,131 millions.
2. Of forest produce	75° "
3. Of produce from cattle (subtracting the value of fodder and the labour comprised under 1.)	176 "
4. Sericulture and apiculture	7 "
5. Hunting and fishing	28 "
6. Mines	153 "
7. Modern and domestic industry (subtracting the value of the raw material)	503 "

If the total revenue is divided by the number of inhabitants in the same territory (84 millions), nearly 45 roubles each is the quotient. To understand how small this sum is compared with the price of necessaries in Russia, it must be remembered that, in a family of peasants decently well off, the annual expenses of each member of the family is half as much again as this. The salary of our village school-

¹ See Appendix A.

masters is from 100 to 300 roubles, a very insufficient amount. Life in the towns is yet dearer. Our students live very poorly, yet their allowance is 300 roubles. If the student has less than this, he goes hungry.

A very large part of the national revenue is nevertheless swallowed up by State charges. The budget for the year 1885 was estimated at 885 million roubles, 23 per cent. of the national revenue. Further, a large number of rich people spend, of course, thousands of roubles each every year. Thus the actual share of each person of the rest of the population will be much less than these miserable 45 roubles.

It is evident that a country under such conditions cannot be contented. In this connection, statistics cast a vivid light on the causes of that revolutionary movement which has during the last ten years manifested itself more and more clearly in the number of plots and peasant revolts.

We must not forget also to take into account the rapid expansion of our population, side by side with this want of economic resources. In 1859 the population of Russia in Europe was 59 millions; in 1881 it had risen to 76 millions, and the ratio of births to the population is constantly increasing. The average increase of population in Russia proper yearly is :

1857-1867	0·73 per cent.
1868-1870	1·07 "
1871-1881	1·7 "

Clearly an increase of births as rapid as this may render the position of a country unbearable, if the

means of production do not increase at least in the same proportion ; and this result is far from being attained in Russia.

Thirty years ago, M. Tengoborsky fixed the revenue of the Russian empire at 2,970 million roubles. This gives (for a population of 48 millions) 43 roubles a head ; *i.e.*, nearly the same result as we arrived at above. But in Tengoborsky's time the rouble was worth four francs, whilst now it is worth less than three. Must we conclude from this, that after these thirty years of development, Russia is poorer than before ? I do not think so. Tengoborsky's figures are as a rule greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless, this comparison shows that the progress of productive forces is not rapid in Russia, is not even sufficient, and this the more, as with advancing civilization the need of more products grows and affects even the masses of the people. Thus, what would perhaps have satisfied the peasant thirty years ago, now appears insufficient to him.

This condition of the productive forces of the country depends, without a doubt, on very complex causes. A very important place among these must be given to the fact that Russia is very backward. This prevents the Russians from carrying out the exploitation of the resources of their territory to the extent that other countries, more advanced, are able to.

The chief branch of our revenue—agriculture—is still in the primitive state. Regular cultivation of forests is unknown among us, one may say ; and the same thing holds good of meadow cultivation. Truly, our Government and the peasants do make

some efforts to drain the marshes ; but that is all. Grass-growing^c is scarcely known ; and this tells unfavourably on the breeding of animals, and thus on agriculture. Throughout the whole of Russia in Europe there is only 21·5 per cent. of cultivated land, whilst in England, *e.g.*, the land regularly cultivated occupies 61 per cent. of the whole territory. In France the percentage is yet larger, 83 per cent.

As yet the Russians till even their cultivated land in very unprofitable fashion. With them labour is of a very superficial nature. Manuring is generally quite insufficient, and most frequently is dispensed with altogether. Thus it is that in Russia a décia-tine produced only 9,436 litres of wheat ; whilst in France the same area of soil yields 24,115 litres. The same thing may be said of the other branches of production. The working of mines and auriferous sands also suffers much from this system of waste, which exhausts the mines with abnormal rapidity.

Factory and manufacturing industry is not, as yet, in a condition to compete with Western Europe, even in the home market ; for Russian products are bad and dear. This deplorable economic state is in great measure the fault of the political government, which for thirty years past has, by its clumsy interference, brought endless confusion into the economic conditions of the country.

CHAPTER II.

The Crimean War revealed to Russia her economic inferiority.—Emancipation of the serfs.—Government policy opposed to logic.—Agriculture the chief economic force in Russia.—Large landed property.—Peasant holdings.—Measures antagonistic to the extension of these last.—Buying-up speculations.—The land crisis.—Exportation stationary.

THE economic inferiority of Russia, as compared with all the other European countries, was understood by the Government, and above all by the people, after the Crimean War. The necessity of economic and social reforms was recognised more or less clearly by the whole of the people, from the lowest peasant to the Emperor Nicolas. At his death, this fanatic conservative left as legacy to his son a command to take a step almost revolutionary, the emancipation of the serfs.

The necessity of extending the productive forces of Russia was evident, and the most clear-seeing men in Russia were then convinced that the means of this development would be especially the development of the labour of the people proper, the peasants. The Russian *mir*, with its communal tenure of the soil, seemed to prove the possibility of that cultivation in common that could be carried

out on a large scale upon the basis of association. The existence of the koustarnié promysly (small owners), together with the Russian habit of working in "artel," seemed to give the possibility of developing industry in the same sense. Lastly, a large number of works and factories belonging to the State formed an easy stepping-stone for the Government to the organization of modern industry, without wholly abandoning it to the hands of the capitalists. This was the more easy, as Russia has very few large capitalists, and the rapid concentration of capital could not be brought about unless the Government came to the rescue. It seemed more economic and more productive that the efforts of the State should aim at organizing labour in those institutions (artel, mir) that had grown up in the very life of the people.

In point of fact, the economic policy of the State, despite some fluctuations, took on a character the exact opposite of this. It did not know how to invent a system of its own, and confined itself to a servile imitation of other lands. It saw no possibility of developing the productive forces of Russia save in the introduction of the economic organization it found in Europe. This want of creative genius always leads to an artificial state of things, out of correspondence with the natural development of the productive forces. And that is exactly what happened. No sensible owner, if he thinks of introducing new branches of exploitation, will on that account abandon those upon which his fortune actually depends, those that give him the material means for making his innovations. Russia acted in exactly

the opposite way to this reasonable owner. Is it wonderful that her estate is on the verge of ruin?

The principal economic force of Russia was and still is agriculture. In Tengoborsky's time, the value of the field produce was to that of the industrial as 85 to 15. At the present time the proportion is nearly the same (83 to 17). Hence the importance of Russia on the international market is due chiefly to agriculture. In ten years (1873-1882) she exported on the average yearly—

1. Food	276 million roubles.
2. Raw material and partly-finished products	195 " "
3. Cattle	15 " "
4. Manufactured goods	11½ " "

The exportation of food especially augments rapidly. It constitutes on the average :—

1847-1851 . . .	31·8 per cent. of the whole exportation.
1865-1867 . . .	39 " "
1873-1877 . . .	53 " "
1878-1882 . . .	56·9 " "

Of the food-stuffs, it is the exportation of cereals that especially increases. From 1858 to 1867, this rose to 38 per cent. of the whole of our exportation; in 1872 to 40 per cent.; in 1882 to over 47 per cent., *i.e.*, almost one-half; and agricultural produce in general formed nearly 90 per cent. of the whole of our exportation. Despite this enormous importance of agriculture in the economy of the country, it is wholly neglected by the Government; indeed, since the emancipation of the peasants, it has been the object of Government attack.

In Russia we have many large landed proprietors ; but the working of their estates is most frequently based upon that which obtains among the peasants. The large owner, as a rule, devotes to it neither labour nor capital ; his part is confined to handling the rents. If, e.g., we take fifteen districts in different parts of Russia, fairly investigated by modern statistics,¹ we shall see that the pomiechtchiks (noble owners) only cultivate 14·5 per cent. of the land in them, whilst the peasants, irrespective of their own holdings, farm 36 per cent. of the land of the pomiechtchiks. The rest of it lies untouched. Thus all the real cultivation is in the hands of the peasants. And yet, after the emancipation, the amount of their holdings has been diminished, in contravention of all principles of law, and at the same time the distribution of their plots of land arranged to their disadvantage.² According to the returns of the official statistics, the peasants under the pomiechtchiks should have had 37 per cent. at least as their share. The actual land assigned to the peasants was, by a fraudulent manœuvre, as inferior in quality as the amount given was in quantity. As a proof of this, the crops of the peasants that they

¹ The districts—Mojaïsk, Volokolamsk, Zvenigorod, Vereia, Poltava, Zenkov, Fatej, Lgov, Koursk, Dmitrov, Rostov, etc.

² Nicolas Milioutine, the celebrated proposer of the Reform of 1861, had clearly laid down the principle that the enfranchised peasants should receive at least the same amount of land as their lords gave them for their own when serfdom was in vogue. Unfortunately, the carrying out of this reform was taken out of the hands of Milioutine and his friends, and given into those of the very opponents of the reform. Thus the wise principles laid down at the time of Milioutine were violated.

get from their own land are much smaller than those they obtain from that which is farmed out to them by the pomiechtchiks.¹ But it is clear that for the peasant to till his own land, however poor it is, may be nevertheless of more advantage than the tilling of good land for which he has to pay rent. Thus the labour of the tiller became in the main transferred to a soil of poor quality. On the other hand, the pomiechtchiks, losing their free labour, could not manage their property; and their magnificent estates remained uncultivated over immense areas. The blow struck at agriculture was so much the heavier as the Government literally crushed the peasant by the tax fixed on the redemption of land. In sixteen of the governments, this tax is one-tenth, or one-half more than the price of the land.

So great did the incapacity to appreciate the vast national importance of agriculture become, so little attention was given to it, that the Government thought they would speculate. When they lent the peasants money for the redemption of their lands, the Government was not content with a sum equal to its expenditure. It realized also a certain profit, in all 40 million roubles. At the transference of the debt of the pomiechtchiks to the peasants, the Government made a similar specula-

¹ E.g., the harvest of 1883 was as follows:—

	Pomiechtchiks' estates.	Peasants' holdings.
Rye	4·5	3·6
Wheat	4·9	4·6
Oats.	4·2	3·4
Buckwheat	3·9	3·6

tion.¹ On this debt (300 million roubles) the pomiechtchiks paid⁴ the treasury four per cent. interest and two per cent. at redemption. As to the peasants, the Government began by charging them seven per cent., only five of this for the redemption of the debt. I go into all these details to show how the Government got the best of all the bargains, and by what mean motives its acts were directed when it was working out the great reform on which the future of the country depended. The peasant, thus fettered in his possession of the land, and overwhelmed with taxes, was going to rack and ruin. Now the ruin of the peasant is the ruin of Russia. The hostility of the Government to the commune, which I have noted above, had also indirectly a very bad effect on agriculture. The protection constantly accorded by the administration to the rich men of the village, who usurp the communal lands; the obstacles opposed by the Government chambers, at every turn, to the splitting up of the estates; the famous Article 165 of the law on the redemption of land;² the permission to the rural assemblies to provisionally let out their land to a tax-payer not

¹ At the time of the serfdom, the State created a fund for loans to the nobility. In 1861 these last owed to the State, on the security of their properties, more than 300 million roubles. By the terms of the statutes of emancipation, the peasants ought to have paid the nobles more than 800 million roubles for the redeeming of their lands. The Government took this payment in hand on condition that they should replace the nobility as creditor of the peasants. But they only paid 500 millions, pocketing the balance.

² Article 165 gives the peasant who has paid the price of redemption, the right of receiving his plot under the title of private property.

very precise in his payments ; all these measures, and yet others, ruined numberless peasants. And this was the more easy because the Government has done nothing for the organization of the village credit. The loan offices and savings banks had no result, in face of the poverty of the peasants. In 1883 the whole deposits were scarcely 12 million roubles. Besides these, the peasant could only have recourse to the store capital (as it is called), which would make him small loans in cases of a severe local famine, or give him seed in times of a bad general harvest. This excellent institution is too poor itself to be able to really lend any useful aid, the more so as it is only intended for the maintenance of whole villages, and not of individuals.

The peasant has a world of wants that force him to turn to the country usurers. Once in their grip, he is lost. Like a spider, the *miroïèd* sucks the juices of his victim until he has reduced him to a state of utter misery. The State, face to face with this evil which is assuming dangerous proportions, is indifferent. Before the creation of the land-bank of the peasants, no serious measure, properly speaking, had been taken to maintain the cultivation of the land by the peasants ; but the bank itself, if it does help the peasants to acquire land, tends at the same time by its statutes to keep up individual landed property and to force the peasants to abolish the *mir*. If the peasant's land is placed under the communal *régime*, he has only right to a loan of 125 roubles at the maximum, and if it is private property, he has 500 as the maximum loan on it. Lastly, the bank has only been established two years.

Under such pressure as this, agricultural exploitation has passed into a state really critical. In the province of Moscow, e.g., 15 per cent. of the total number of peasant families have not the means to carry on the cultivation of the soil. Further, it must be noted that 42 per cent. of the families ruined have been ruined by the heaviness and rigorous levying of the taxes and by the conscription. In some places the ruin of peasant cultivation is yet more complete. Thus, in the province of Poltava, where there is no commune to protect the peasants, 38 per cent. of them did not sow any wheat in 1882; in the province of Zenkov, the percentage was 40. In other provinces where the agrarian crisis has not caused such ruin as this, cultivation is in an equally lamentable state. Poor, riddled with debts, the peasant cannot make any improvement in his land. He is obliged to cultivate it anyhow. The want of cattle prevents him from manuring it. Generally speaking, there are too few cattle in Russia. In 1870 it was estimated that the number of cattle was only one-third or as little as one-sixth of what was necessary for the needs of agriculture; since then the condition of things has become even worse. According to the census of 1882, one-fourth of the peasants are without horses.

It must not be thought that the peasants are not energetic enough in this sustained struggle with unfavourable circumstances. Quite the contrary. Seeing their obstinate efforts to improve their agricultural exploitation, one of the ablest Russian agriculturists, Engelgard, is certain, at least as far as concerns his country (the government of

Smolensk), that with time the lands of the proprietors (*pomiechtchiks*) will become uncultivated wastes, and those of the peasants flourishing gardens. In some places the method of culture of the peasant has undergone much improvement. Moreover, one comes across agricultural implements of a high order; *e.g.*, threshing machines drawn by horses. It is impossible also not to notice, in comparing the harvests for a period of fifteen to twenty years, that the tilling of the fields becomes more varied. Lastly, even the amount of the grain harvest does not diminish; on the contrary, it increases considerably. From 1834 to 1840 it yielded in Russia in Europe (exclusive of Poland and Finland) 179 million "tchetverts" a year; from 1864 to 1866, over the same area, 200 million; in 1873, more than 272 million. But this victory is dearly bought.

The necessity of working poor land, the high rents, the want of cattle and of capital, all these causes have a very bad influence on the quality and price of the produce. Recently, they have begun to affect the international market. The better sorts of grain, *i.e.*, the various qualities of wheat, whose prices especially rise with that of rent, tend more and more to give place to American produce. During the last few years, the competition of India, which produces wheat at a very low price, has become still more formidable than the American. Russian rye remains more firm upon the world-market, perhaps because the peasants cultivate it on their own land more frequently than other cereals. But rye is one of the cereals that yields least profit

and sells at the lowest rate. The same competition affects the other products of rural economy. Flax, one of the principal elements of Russian commerce, is compelled to give way before that of Italy and of India. In 1885 the British Consul, Mr. Mitchell, even made an official representation to the Government, in which it was stated that if the growing of Russian flax did not improve, the English merchants would not be able to buy any more of it.¹

What will happen if the Russian rural economy is beaten on the European market? Where will Russia find means to procure the products of European industry? Let us remember that over 90 per cent. of Russian exportation consists of agricultural products. These questions become singularly grave in view of the commercial crisis. In 1884 Russian exportation fell 572,820,000 roubles, as compared with that of 1883. In 1885, judging from the earlier months at least, the situation seemed worse still; the exportation during January and February fell 6½ million roubles, as compared with the year before.

¹ *Moscow Gazette*, 1885, No. 156.

CHAPTER III.

Industry.—Efforts of Government in favour of large capital.—
Speculation.—Joint-stock companies.—Railroads.—Protectionist tariffs.—Trans-Caucasus and frontier questions.—
Germans in Poland.—Wonderful remedy proposed by Katkov.—Commercial balance-sheet.

THE economic policy of the State has had indirect as well as direct influence on the condition of agriculture. Its dominating tendency the last thirty years has always been the creation of a large capital, which, it was pretended, ought to develop the industrial forces of Russia just as it has done in Western Europe.

The anxiety to imitate Western Europe constrained our economic politicians to concern themselves greatly with the development of manufacturing industry. With this end in view, the Government neglected no means, spared no interest of the enormous majority of the population that furnished it with the money necessary to the development of a large capital. The State was like a sort of pump, drawing from the bosom of Russia the smallest particles of the people's revenues, to water with them the germs of large capital. Thanks to this policy, the placing of capital in serious

industrial enterprises became in Russia less advantageous than the employment of it in speculation. From that time forth was created, as far as industry was concerned, a most unhealthy atmosphere. Agriculture, beholding all capital turning from her, felt most severely the consequences of this policy, which had also its fatal influence on manufacturing industry itself. We can judge, e.g. how abnormal is this general tendency of capital in Russia by the part it plays in the various joint-stock companies.

In 1880, these companies had a capital of 6,600 million francs. This sum was made up as follows :—

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Railway and steamboat companies . | 5,370 millions. |
| 2. Banks and insurance companies . | 400 " |
| 3. Trade and industrial companies . | 830 " |

Thus we see that 80 per cent. of the share-capital was invested in means of communication. And why? Unfortunately, that is not difficult to understand. Because the Government has wasted on railroads nearly 6,000 million francs that it had derived from rural economy and by borrowing. In this direction then the Government opened a credit, guaranteed a revenue to capital. Of course every one rushed at an investment so excellent, in which money could be made, not only with no risk, but even without capital. In Russia there have also been made a large number of railroads in no sense necessary for economic purposes, and not in a position to cover their expenses. At the present time the Government reimburses these companies without a future, with millions of guarantees. Thus,

in 1884,¹ more than 14 million roubles were paid in guarantees, *i.e.*, nearly 3 per cent. on all the share-capital of the railway companies. And moreover, all this capital² was really received by the companies directly from the hands of the Government. In 1881 the whole of the share-capital (excepting that which belonged to the Government) was 554 million roubles. As to the debt of the companies to the Government—it amounted to 530 millions.³ We see from this that the companies themselves have only created a capital of about 24 millions. The joint-stock banks, and unfortunately also the town banks, were still a considerable source of gain.

Not to weary the reader with a mass of details, I will only mention here a single example of the speculations to which the economic policy of the State gave scope. Wishing to keep up the rate of Russian bills abroad, the Government of Alexander II. for many years paid the difference between their real value and their price on the European market. This measure was extended to all the capital sent abroad. It was a means of getting money from the State of genial simplicity. Speculation did not lose the opportunity. This is how it was done. Money was sent into Russia; then, when it had been turned into Russian values, it was sent abroad again, to begin the same operation over again. Unfortunately I have not enough data to calculate how many millions the speculators made

¹ I calculate the metallic rouble at four francs, the paper rouble at 254 centimes.

² *The Russian Gazette*, 1884; No. 193.

³ Golovatchev: "History of Russian Railroads," p. 383.

in this way; but at all events they made colossal fortunes.

Can any serious industrial enterprise exist in a country in which money can be made with such ease and simplicity? Here one side of the economic policy of the State—the creation of capital—destroyed the other—the creation of modern industry. Consequently the Government was compelled to redouble its efforts in order to attain this second end. Its policy became more and more protectionist. Russian industry was shielded from foreign competition by a sufficiently protective tariff, although it might be regarded as comparatively liberal. In 1877 the custom-house duties were ordered to be paid in gold. In 1881 the tariff was raised 10 per cent. In 1885, a fresh rise of 20 per cent. At the same time industry was encouraged by forced orders. It is the custom, when concessions are made to railroads, to make it a condition that the contractor shall order a certain quantity of rails and rolling stock from Russian works. Direct subsidies again come to the rescue of industry, as at the Neva Works. On the world-market also, Russian industry is always supported by the Government. Alexander II. carried this protection to the most extreme limits. Alexander III. seems to mean going further yet. At the present moment, to maintain her modern industry, Russia is sacrificing the most important political interests, both in the question of the Trans-Caucasus route and in the questions of frontier with Finland and Poland.

If, starting at Paris, we draw a straight line to Calcutta, the line runs through the Caucasus. Thus

Russia holds in her hands the shortest road to India. Hence, when the railway from Poti to Bakou, which joins the Black and Caspian Seas, was made, and when, after that, the making of the line from Krasnovodsk (on the Caspian Sea) to the borders of Afghanistan was begun, Russia had in her hands one of the most important commercial arteries of the world. It is easy to understand what political influence upon Europe this one line from Poti to Bakou would give to Russia. It is easy to see that not only the Trans-Caucasus region, but also the Trans-Caspian—until now held to Russia mainly by force of arms—would be attached to her by the powerful force of economic interest. Holding both parts of this route, which is of value only as a whole, Russia would have tight in her grasp both the regions traversed by the two portions of the route from the Black Sea to Afghanistan. On the other hand, it is easy to understand the discontent and irritation that would break out against Russia in these regions, if she took from them by force the enormous advantages the geographical position of the country gives them. Besides, there is the possible reduction of military expenses in the Caucasus and Trans-Caspian region. All this has been sacrificed to a handful of Russian manufacturers and merchants. The Russian Government, anxious to give these men the monopoly of the commerce with Persia and the Trans-Caspian regions, has forbidden transit by the Trans-Caucasian railway. And yet the whole of the Russian commercial traffic with abroad that goes by way of the Trans-Caucasus route and the Caspian Sea does

not exceed 21 million roubles (less than half of this is Russian goods). Further, there are only exported by this route 4 millions of manufactured products that are threatened with competition. The reader will see to the profit of what futile industrial interests the gravest political ones are sacrificed.

The same sort of thing has now occurred as to Finland, and is threatening again as to Poland. In both these countries, industry develops more rapidly than in Russia. In 1872, Russia imported into Finland manufactured goods to the extent of 1,500,000 roubles, and received from her 3,863,000 of goods. In 1882, this state of things was modified, again to the disadvantage of Russia ; her exportation of manufactured goods to Finland was 2,888,000 roubles, whilst that of Finland to Russia had risen to 9,673,000. Thus it is clear Russian industry cannot protect its market from the influx of manufactured goods from Finland. In 1885 there was an active agitation fomented by Russian manufacturers in favour of a raising of customs dues on the Finland frontier. Besides other things, the Finns were accused of introducing into Russia European goods as products of their own factories. To a certain extent this assertion is accurate. But everyone knows how important to Russia, from the political point of view, are satisfactory relations with the Grand Duchy. The complaints of the manufacturers have, however, prevailed, and in 1885 the customs dues on the Finland frontier were raised. This will estrange Finland, already chafing at a forced alliance with Russia, yet further from her.

Customs duties between Russia and Poland have

been for a long time abolished; so that it is difficult to give an exact account of the victories that the Poles have won on the Russian market. In any case they must be very great, since they have been able to fashion an economic link between Russia and Poland that even the latter fears to break. The industry of the Polish kingdom develops much more rapidly than that of Russia. In the last sixteen years the sum total of the factory production in Russia in Europe has increased 99 per cent.¹ The number of workers employed by the works and factories has during the same time risen 15 per cent. In Poland, in these sixteen years, production has increased 196 per cent., and the number of workers 67 per cent. For this enormous progress Poland is undoubtedly in part indebted to agrarian reform. The emancipation of the peasants there has been carried out much more fully than in Russia, and this has largely increased the well-being of the mass of the people. But the chief reason, in all probability, is not this. It must be looked for in the prohibitive Russian tariff. The German manufacturers, meeting with difficulties in the importation of their goods into Russia, thought it would be better to found branches of their factories beyond the frontier. Hence, all along this frontier sprang up colonies of German factories with German capital, managers and workmen. These advance guards of the German nation form sometimes whole villages, as in the case of the celebrated Lodz, the foremost

¹ If the low value of the rouble is taken into account, the increase is much less, although in any case it is not less than 52 per cent.

industrial town in the kingdom. In 1860, the population was made up in nearly equal parts of Poles on the one hand, Germans and Jews on the other. Now, it numbers 70,000. The town is so German, that when one of its German journals (it has not a Polish one) opened its columns to the Poles,¹ the Poles hailed this tolerance as a victory. The industry of Poland is, as we see, to a large extent only German, and by virtue of this presents a real danger to Russian industry, since it has on its side the enormous capitals, the enterprise, the ability of Germany.

What measures are taken to ward off this danger? Alas! the mean interests of the manufacturers continue to blind the eyes of the Government. Instead of altering its economic policy, the Government confines itself to raising its prohibitive tariffs. In the circles whose opinion is always the forerunner of Government decisions, there is talk of extravagant projects that threaten the very integrity of the empire. The manufacturers demand the establishment of a customs frontier between Russia and Poland. The *Moscow Gazette* goes further. It proposes simply to yield to Germany all that part of Poland which German industry has conquered. A fine, wise project, truly! And then what will happen, when the Germans, after absorbing the 1,000 square leagues ceded them, leap, with their workmen, the new frontier? Shall we have to yield them in fifteen years another 1,000 or 10,000 square leagues? Must half Russia be sacrificed to protect

¹ There is now a Polish journal at Lodz—the *Dzennik Lodszy* *(*Lodz Memorial*).

the interests of the Muscovite manufacturers? In fine, who exists for the sake of the other? The manufacturers for Russia, or Russia for the manufacturers?

The reader will see plainly that the mania for protecting modern industry, that has cost Russia so many hundreds of thousands, has thus far failed to give a firm position to Russian industry. If this last, protected from all competition, does develop at all, it remains sickly and weak. At the present moment, it not only is afraid to run any risk on the international market, but it is not even firmly established on the Russian. In 1885, with a view to induce the manufacturers of beet-root sugar (one of the most important branches of Russian industry) to venture on the world market, the Government promised a bounty of one rouble per poud (15 kilograms) of sugar exported abroad, and the return of the excise duties. Now, to get the necessary supplies for the payment of bounties, the excise duties on sugar consumed in Russia have been raised.

This is a slight illustration of the continual over-payments that the people of Russia are compelled to make in favour of industry. And yet this same industry is very slow at conquering the foreign market. The value of the factory produce exported by Russia in proportion to the general value of exported things was—

From 1847-1851	10·0 per cent.
„ 1865-1867	7·5 „
„ 1873-1877	2·5 „
„ 1878-1882	2·0 „

Thus the part played in Russian exportation by

factory produce is becoming more and more insignificant. What is still more dangerous is, that the produce of the Russian factories is not even secure on its own ground. From 1865 to 1867, the factory products that came on to the Russian market were worth on an average 697,500,000 roubles a year : 9 per cent. of this was furnished by products imported from abroad. From 1878 to 1882, the demands of the market having increased, the factory products rose to 1,335 million roubles a year, but in this foreign products figure at 11 per cent., and that without reckoning the enormous amount of contraband goods or the produce of the German factories in Poland. Finally, that the dependent position, industrially speaking, of Russia as compared with the surrounding countries, is increasing may be seen indisputably by the proportion between the exportation of Russian factory products and the importation of similar foreign products. From 1873 to 1877, the former were 8·4 per cent of the latter. From 1878 to 1882 they were already only 8·1 per cent.; from which it follows that the amount of manufactured goods imported into Russia increases more rapidly than the amount of those exported.

Thus the tremendous efforts that have been made to create a large capital in Russia by fettering the development of her agriculture, nevertheless have failed to give a solid basis of operations to manufacturing industry. The productive forces of the country are in a condition of great debility that presages no good. From this there results an extremely abnormal consequence to the commercial balance-sheet. As a whole, the foreign trade does

without doubt increase. In 1858, its total turn-over was only 300 million roubles ; in 1882, it amounted to the enormous figure of 1,223 millions. It is true that a large part of this increase is purely fictitious, that the increase in the number of roubles is in part due to the fall in their value. But if we subtract from the exportation-figures for 1882, 40 per cent. to allow for the rate of exchange of the rouble, nevertheless the increase in the commercial turn-over will be very large. This state of affairs, at first sight favourable, will however, if we examine the commercial balance-sheet, appear in quite another light. Actually in the ten years from 1873 to 1882¹ the sum total of Russian exportation was 4,964 million roubles, and that of Russian importation 5,117 millions. Thus the productive forces of the country were quite insufficient to pay with their own goods those foreign goods absolutely indispensable to them. In such a position, in order to effect payment, capital itself must be encroached upon, and in point of fact, the exportation of precious metals (in coin or bullion), rose to 386 million roubles, whilst their importation was only 122 millions. From 1874 to 1878, the annual average of this excess of exportation of the precious metals was only 6 million roubles ; from 1879 to 1883 it suddenly rose to 34 millions.

¹ In 1883 and 1884, the condition of trade was yet more abnormal. These years coincided with an unmistakable crisis.

CHAPTER IV.

State finances.—Their condition.—State debt.—Deficit and monetary crisis.—Depreciation of the rouble.

WITH the abnormal condition of the productive forces of the country that I have just explained, the situation of the State finances is closely connected.

The disorder of Russian finances is no new fact, and the constitution alone of the country would have been enough to bring it about. Absolutism and a regular management of finances are not very likely to go together. Absence of control over the national resources is a bad stimulus to economy, and administrative centralization is always expensive.

The warlike policy, sometimes demanded by national interests, yet more frequently kept up with as sole object the satisfying the ambition of tzars and generals, was yet more expensive. Thus the Government has, this long time past, had recourse to loans and paper money. In Russia, the latter is more frequent than the former. Paper money at forced rates, mere confiscation in the disguise of popular property, is very useful to Governments. If, e.g., the sum total of the money in circulation in a country is 5,000 millions, the Government, in issuing 100 million paper roubles, only truly gets hold of

98 million roubles (on account of the depreciation of silver); but on the other hand, the money is taken from the people so cleverly that the latter do not notice it. The people only see that everything is dearer, but do not ascribe their misfortunes to the Government, as they would do if the latter established a new tax or essayed open confiscation.

Since the Government inaugurated its new economic policy, its expenses have increased yet further, and their increase always exceeds that of the revenue. This is a characteristic trait of the Russian budget of the present time, the explanation of which is in the artificiality of the present Government policy. By following a line directly opposed to the tendency of the natural growth of productive forces, it brings about enormous expenses that are either not reimbursed at all, or else only to a small extent. Expenditure must therefore of necessity increase more quickly than income.

To meet the calls upon it, the Government had recourse to new issues of paper money, whilst it gave, certainly, constant assurances of its desire to put an end to all such issues, and even to withdraw from circulation all paper money. Nevertheless, whilst in 1857 it only put in circulation paper equivalent to 568 million roubles, in 1883 more than 1,100 millions were issued. It is easy to understand what disturbance this incessant stream of issues continually caused in Russian industry. Only the terrible lowering of the rate and raising of prices restrained the Government, and prevented it from issuing millions of new notes. On the other hand, it went in for loans with more vigour than ever.

In 1856, the State debts were estimated at 2,537 million roubles. In 1883 they amounted to 5,424 millions. During these twenty-seven years the whole of the pecuniary resources of the State had been as follows :—

1. Estimated Revenue	12,770	million roubles.
2. Loans	2,887	" "
3. Paper-money	55°	" "

In other words, the Government spends systematically one-fifth more than its normal income, and thus increases its debt each year by an average sum of 100 million roubles. This debt has already reached such colossal dimensions, that the mere payment of the interest swallows up annually one-fourth of the budget (more than 200 million roubles out of 800 and odd millions of total expenditure). This debt weighs as heavily now upon Russia as the maintenance of her army.

The results of this perilous financial administration were for a time hidden by the artificial excitement produced in Russian industry by the speculation that the Government policy encouraged. Since then, however, the rate of exchange of the rouble has undergone terrible fluctuations that have been as disastrous to serious industrial enterprises as they have been advantageous to stock-exchange speculation. After the Crimean War, the rouble was for some time at four francs, then the rate fell slowly.¹

At first, part of the mass of money the Govern-

¹ In 1876 the rouble was worth $316\frac{1}{2}$ centimes; in 1880, 263; in 1883, 249.

ment had thrown on the market came back to it in the form of increase of revenue; but since 1876, the non-equilibrium between the forces of production and expenditure has taken its revenge upon the Government with an ever-increasing severity. An obstinate deficit is conspicuous in the budget. In the ten years, from 1876 to 1885, only three have shown no deficit. The deficit in the ordinary revenues during the reign of Alexander III. is already nearly 120 millions, and the credit of Russia is so shaky that the intervention of Bismarck was necessary to the conclusion of the latest loan, from Bleichroder, of Berlin.

CHAPTER V.

Democratic character of landed property.—Transmigration of the peasants.—Policy of the Government.—Local industries.—Initiative of the peasants —Crisis in these industries.

FROM that which has gone before, the reader can understand that the economic condition of the people in Russia is very miserable. Every industrial crisis is always felt by the worker. The Russian worker feels their consequences the more acutely, as this unsettling of labour is accompanied by the destruction of those forms that history has given to the national labour.

Landed property in Russia has still a very democratic character. Of the whole 433 million déciatines in Russia in Europe (not counting the Northern Caucasus) more than 120 millions belong to the peasants, and 151 millions are the property of the State, *i.e.* in principle are national property. Only 100 millions belong to landed proprietors.¹ The rest of the land belongs to the towns, the Cossacks, etc.; *i.e.*, is in great part held directly by the working class. If we study the holders of land in comparison with the population-numbers, we find the same democratic principle. Ianson estimates at not less

¹ Ianson : "Statistics," vol. ii. p. 169.

than 23 millions the number of individuals owning land in Russia. This is 36 per cent. of the population. Yet this is much below the truth. In France, the number of landed proprietors only forms 10 percent. of the population. But that which would content the agricultural population of Western Europe is far from satisfying that of Russia, as much by reason of the habits and ideas of the latter as by reason of the conditions of cultivation. The Russian looks-on the land as national property. The Russian cultivator, because of the large scale on which he farms, has need of a large amount of land, and he is in the habit of being satisfied in this respect. In half of Russia, the peasant is accustomed to find a protection against want of land in his agrarian commune; and if in his own locality he should be straitened, he is accustomed to find in the extreme parts of Russia a large amount of free land, that can be taken possession of by the emigrant without any one objecting, without any payment being made.

All these conditions have undergone a notorious modification at the present time. The amount of land cultivated by the peasants is increasing absolutely; but relatively to the increase of the population, it is decreasing more and more. The commune, at once deprived of the protection of the laws, and undermined by legislation, can with difficulty maintain the struggle for existence.

I have already had occasion to speak of the contest in which the peasants are engaged in their attempt to get back equality and equity in the dividing up of the communal land.

Now, as formerly, there are plenty of places, rich

and free, for those who wish to shift their position. But here, also, the general tendency of the economic policy of the Government comes in. The removal of the peasants is troublesome to the landed proprietors, for it raises the price of the worker wherever it occurs. The Government hampers any such removal with a crowd of formalities. Moreover, as a consequence of the same tendencies, the need of creating large landed proprietors compels the Government to place an enormous amount of free land in the hands of the large proprietors. Thus, magnificent estates in the province of Kouban were given to the officers of the army of the Caucasus. These estates had lain unoccupied since the Tcherkesses were driven from them. In the hands of their new proprietors, they still were but as waste lands; for these officers had not the requisite knowledge to concern themselves personally with agriculture, and, moreover, they had not the capital indispensable for putting them in cultivation. These lands, however, are in any case inaccessible to the transmigrating population, for men do not leave the land of their birth in order to become farmers in a foreign one. The people have not the means to buy land; hence the fertile region of the Black Sea, whose soil supported nearly a million Tcherkesses, now has (twenty years after its annexation to Russia), not more than 15,000 inhabitants. With the like exorbitant generosity, the land out in the east, in the provinces of Oufa and Orenburg, was given to officers and officials. This is the reason why, although there are vast extents of land unpopulated, the peasant does not know where to go.

My readers will hardly believe, that even where the attempt is made to attract the population, e.g., on the banks of the river Amour, the Government reserves the best land for the treasury and its own dependants, and only lets the immigrant peasants have the worst. This is done, because later on, when the country is populated, the lands thus reserved will yield a good revenue. The most important result obtained is, that the country remains a desert. The limited population makes vain efforts upon an ungrateful soil, whilst hard by splendid land is over-run with weeds and is the haunt of deer.

Even in Russia this short-sighted policy is beginning to cause general disquietude, for it threatens the breaking-up of the Russian hold on the Amour. The Chinese, who constantly dream of recovering this country from Russia, are making great efforts to people the bank of this river that has fallen to their share. Already even they are crossing over to the Russian bank ; and the congress, summoned in 1886 by the governor-general, reported that the district of Nikolaevsk alone is free from Chinese influence. And in Russia, over boundless tracts of land is dispersed a poor population of scarcely 87,000, and this thirty years and more after the annexation. In this 87,000 are included the soldiers ; the rest of the population (49,000) is made up of foreigners, of whom 35,000 are Chinese and inhabitants of the Corea.¹

Of course, the transmigration of the Russian people does not cease ; on the contrary, it assumes great proportions. Unfortunately, the statistics of

¹ See *Review of the East*, 1886, No. 27.

the question have been very little studied, so that it is difficult to give on this subject figures even approximately correct. Nevertheless, the major part of the peasants are obliged to remain cooped up in their native country on their parcelled-out lands. Their only resource is the farming of lands belonging to the large landed proprietors, and work on the fields of the latter. But farming means the possession of means, and as to work, the landed-proprietors have little of it to give. It is impossible not to pause for a moment on this fact. Whilst the number of peasants seeking work goes on increasing, the estates of the landed proprietors employ only an insignificant amount of labour. If we take eight provinces¹ in the most fertile region of the Black Sea, where cultivation by large landed proprietors is most developed, we find that in these eight provinces cultivation by the large landed proprietors only yields employment to 15,938 labourers (men and women); but the number of peasants there of working age is 485,946. From these figures an idea can be formed of the peasant's difficulty in finding work with the landed proprietors, when the tilling his own land presents difficulties.

Something of the same sort is seen in industry. To the mass of our population local industries (*koustarnitchestvo*) have always been and are now a great assistance. The *koustarnitchestvo* comprehends the little local industries with which the whole or part of the family of the peasant busy themselves without giving up, on this account, agriculture. Of

¹ Those of Soudja, Rylsk, Dmitriev, Fatiej, I.gov, Poltava, Zenkov, Voronej.

course this industry is better developed in the less fertile provinces, and especially in the central provinces of Grand Russia. At the present time, even in the government of Moscow, where manufacturing industry has attained an enormous development, it only yields the population 13 per cent.¹ of what they earn by labour, while the small local industry gives 18 per cent. The history of this small local industry is full of remarkable examples of energy, activity, and sagacity on the part of the peasants.

How does the local industry arise in a particular village?

In most cases thus. Whilst he is at Moscow or St. Petersburg or some other town, a peasant notices some calling or other that seems of use for his own district. When he gets home, he tries to follow it. If he is successful, his neighbours learn it, and the particular calling finds its way into volosts and whole provinces.

Sometimes the appearance of an industry in a village is due to some quite accidental cause. In the district of Miedyn, a postilion from Moscow broke his "douga," (a curved piece of wood that forms part of Russian harness), and left it on the road. A peasant picked it up. He looked at the broken douga, and saw it was made of the wood of a tree whose forests of which grew in that district. He tried to make a douga, succeeded, and now this industry brings in to the people of Miedyn some ten thousand roubles.

In a precisely similar way, a particular method of wool-knitting was started in the province of Moscow

¹ "Statistics of the Zemstvo of Moscow," vii. Part III.

as result of a peasant woman finding by the roadside a woollen cap some one had lost.

Similar cases abound in the history of local industry, which includes the most diverse branches of smithwork, cutlery, the making of buttons and musical instruments, weaving, pottery, etc.

The steadiness at work of the peasant is generally beyond all praise. He has a religious respect for work, and says that "God loves labour." "Every spare moment," says a competent observer, "is devoted to some work or other. A little girl of eleven, if you ask her what she does in the winter, answers that she has spun, has prepared thread for two cloths, each of seven murs (a mur contains five archines), then yarn for stockings, lastly that she has knitted twenty pairs of socks.

"'And what did you do after that?'

"'Helped mother look after the cattle, swept out the izba, minded the children. In autumn I thrashed corn.'

"'You know how to thrash corn?'

"'They made me a flail lighter than the rest, and last autumn I thrashed wheat.'

"A child of eleven did all this work."

Moreover, the peasants have not a very strong liking for routine. On the contrary, whenever this is possible, they very often improve methods of production, and if one kind of industry is no longer advantageous, they pass by degrees to another. The diversity of Russian small local industry is of comparatively recent origin; sometimes it springs up

¹ "Statistics of Moscow," vii. Part II. p. 147.

under our very eyes, and most frequently it has not been in existence a century. This flexibility gives the small industrial man the power to compete even with the factories.

A year ago, a German, Herr Blomkwist, after studying Russian small local industry from the life, predicted its future. But of this I do not think one can be certain. It must be borne in mind that in Russia nothing is done for the small industrial worker (*koustar*) ; there are no technical schools, no model museums, no credit for the producer, no markets to facilitate the sale of his products. As result of all these disadvantages, the small industrial worker, deprived of technical as well as of general education, not in a position to see good models, often ignorant even of where his produce goes or by whom it is used—is of necessity outstripped in the *technique* of his industry by the factory. Then he has no capital, and either works alone or with two or three wage-labourers, sometimes (but very rarely) in a small organization. All these causes prevent him from selling his wares to any great extent, and from using the necessary machines, etc.; and all this makes his work very unremunerative. Generally, he only holds on because he is content with the minimum of gain. Thus, *e.g.*, in the province of Moscow, the weaver, employed in a factory, earns 13 to 14 roubles a month. The weaver who works on his own account only earns 5 to 6.¹ Yet he prefers working at home, since then he need not give up the tilling of his own land. But small as

¹ "Statistics of the Zemstvo of Moscow," vii. Part III.

the gain may be with which he has to be content, competition with the factory is only possible within certain limits.

Production on the large scale, brought to a greater pitch of perfection, lowers the price of the product to such an extent, that the "small man," if he does not mean working for nothing, is compelled to give up his industry completely, or else to turn to some other kind not yet encroached upon by manufacturing production. Often he chooses a middle way: He works for the factory at home. The factory becomes his agent. In the silk factories of Moscow, where hand labour is still employed, 80 per cent. of the produce is made by small industrial workers, to whom the proprietors of these factories distribute the material that they work up at home. It is clear that this compromise is only possible so long as the factory is not yet strong enough to use steam. As soon as machinery is at work, the home-worker must choose between ruin and the *rôle* of a wage-worker.

Industry, however, is far from developing with sufficient speed to give work to all the small industrial men. According to the approximate calculations of the Statistical Military Summary, there are more than 5,000,000 of these. As to the number of the hands employed in the factories of Russia in Europe, in 1882 it was only 954,970, and this number, having regard to the increase of population, has remained stationary. In 1866, according to the Summary, (v. s.) the total number of hands employed by the factories was 1·3 per cent. of the population; in 1882, it was 1·2, *i.e.*, it is diminishing comparatively. Thus wages are in such a position with respect to

supply and demand that the latter can only lower them. And the mass of the peasants here, as in agriculture, as they see their little independent industry decrease, have no hope of finding compensation for their losses by entering the factories as wage-workers.

CHAPTER VI.

Material condition of the Russian people.—Budget of the well-to-do family and of the indigent.—Workmen's wages.—Budget of the Muscovite peasants.—Food.—Famine-bread.—Growth of population.—Births and deaths.

WHAT, in such conditions, can be the material situation of the masses?

Here are some figures that will give an idea of it.

Sémiénov, a very careful observer, calls a family in the province of Riazan comfortably off if it has ten members (including children) and 340 roubles of yearly income, *i.e.*, 34 on an average per member. An indigent family would be four members at 112 roubles a year, *i.e.*, 28 on an average per head. But in the self-same district there are families so miserable that with four members they have only 20 roubles of income, *i.e.*, an average of five roubles a head.¹ Naturally, a family as poor as this has to beg; and in Russian villages beggars are not uncommon. A large number of tillers of the soil are obliged for a certain time each year, whilst they are

¹ Sokolovsky: "Summary of Materials for the Study of the Agrarian Commune," pp. 140 *et seq.*

waiting for the harvest to ripen, to beg their bread. Every peasant looks upon it as a duty to help the needy, who perhaps next year may do the same for him.

From this an idea may be formed as to how precarious is the condition of the peasant. In the government of Tver, the statistics of the zemstvo declare as indispensable to a family of peasants (five to seven in number) comfortably off, an income of 191 roubles, *i.e.*, nearly 34 per head. It is not always possible to get this for the peasants.¹

Labourers' wages vary greatly; their amount depends on the kind of occupation and the condition of industry generally. Ianjoul—as official inspector he is well up in the subject—declares that the wages of the Russian worker are 400 per cent. below those of the American and 300 per cent. below those of the English.²

In the government of Moscow, all the money earned in agriculture, the factories, the koustarnitchestvo or any other industry, makes up a sum of 42 million roubles, which, divided among 1,195,000 peasants, gives 35·5 per man per year.³ And as the government of Moscow is by no means the poorest, one may take these numbers as approximately accurate for all Russia.

However cheap living may be in Russia, this miser-

¹ "How the Labour of a Peasant Family tolerably well off is Recompensed in the government of Tver."

² "Report to the Society of Jurisprudence," December 24th, 1883.

³ "Statistics of the Zemstvo of Moscow," vii., Part III.

able sum nevertheless is not even enough for the most meagre existence. The artisan and peasant reduce their wants to a minimum inconceivable by the workers of other lands. Pieskov, Inspector of Factories in the government of Vladimir, has made a calculation, according to which the factory hand ought to spend on his food five to six roubles, or even as little as two and a half to three, per month. What can a man get to eat for ten kopeks a day? "Sometimes," says Pieskov, "the labourers eat no meat at all, and live solely on bread, poustyia chtchi (cabbage soup made with water only), and buckwheat with a little fat or oil. Sometimes the labourer has 37 grams of meat a day, and in the most favourable cases nearly 103 grams of meat or fish."¹

The peasant replaces meat by mushrooms, nutritive but indigestible food. The ordinary food of the labourers is noticeable for its simplicity. It is a soup of kvass, with a great deal of onions and very little fish, or a cabbage soup seasoned with flour, but no meat, or only a mere fragment, anything just to give it a flavour. This solitary dish the labourer eats with an enormous quantity of brown bread, the staple food.

If we look at the rations of the peasant families, even of those that are not the poorest, we find the people content with the strictly necessary things. Let us take as an instance family No. 2 of the pamphlet "The Callings in the Government of

¹ Pieskov: "Life in the Factories of the Government of Vladimir."

Moscow." Expenditure for each member of the family, 41·5 roubles (*i.e.* above the average). Well, in the accounts we find all sorts of expenditure for bread, salt, greens, buckwheat, cucumbers, etc. There are only 131 kilograms 220 grams of meat in the year for a family of eight, and only 150 eggs. The one luxury is a little tea and sugar. Expenditure on holidays in taverns or elsewhere, for the whole family, 4 roubles a year. The total outlay on luxury is only 2 per cent. on the total expenditure. Here we are speaking of the peasant who is not badly off. Very often the peasant has not even this poor supply of food. Then he mixes with his flour, bran, husks, or pine-bark.

In certain poor localities, *e.g.*, in the government of Kazan famine-bread or pouschnoi is constantly on the table of the peasant. Here is an analysis of this bread made in the laboratory of the University of Kazan :—

"The size is that of an ordinary cake ; thickness about $1\frac{1}{2}$ centimetre. The surface is of a dirty grey, and where it is broken, deep brown. It is very brittle, and has not been long baked. On its surface and at the places where it is broken there is a large quantity of the envelopes of the grain and of husks. Sometimes it has a salt and gritty taste, as if it were a mineral. It has not the taste of bread. Microscopic analysis reveals the presence of a large amount of foreign matter, of rye and husks. This proves the bread to contain rye. The analysis yields 7·6 per cent. ash, and 24 per cent. water. In the ash there is a considerable quantity of chlorates.

The chloroform test has determined the presence of a large amount of mineral admixture."

Thus a chemical and microscopic analysis is necessary before it can be decided whether this is bread or a piece of mud. Yet this "bread" is the food of thousands of people, and at times, when the harvests are bad, of millions perhaps. Is it not matter for surprise that the peasants are strong enough to be able to live on such food? Often no strength that is theirs can bear up against these privations. The degeneration of the race is just now an ascertained fact. The average stature of the people has diminished—their physical strength is lessening. It was said above that the increase of population in Russia is very great. This increase results from the fecundity of the people. The coefficient of births in European Russia is on the average 4·8 per cent. and even 5 in some of the provinces, whilst the most prolific people in Europe, the Prussians, have only a coefficient of 3·8, and France only 2·6 per cent. On the other hand, the rate of mortality in Russia is disproportionately high, and has risen considerably these last few years. From 1859 to 1863 the rate was 3·6 per cent.; from 1868 to 1870, 3·73 per cent.¹

In many places in Russia, it is proved that the number of deaths is greater even than that of the births. This holds good at times of whole governments, *e.g.*, that of Kazan, and of many volosts in the north. According to the conclusions from the

¹ Rate of mortality in Prussia 2·7 per cent.; in France still lower, 2·1 (Ianson, "Statistics" I.).

Moscow statistics, these localities are precisely those in which the personal working of the soil by the peasants is at an end. There is nothing extraordinary in this. For Modern Industry, on the development of which the Government spends enormous sums, with a persistent sacrifice of the interests of the working class, can only give a livelihood to a very small fraction of the people.

END OF VOL. I.

